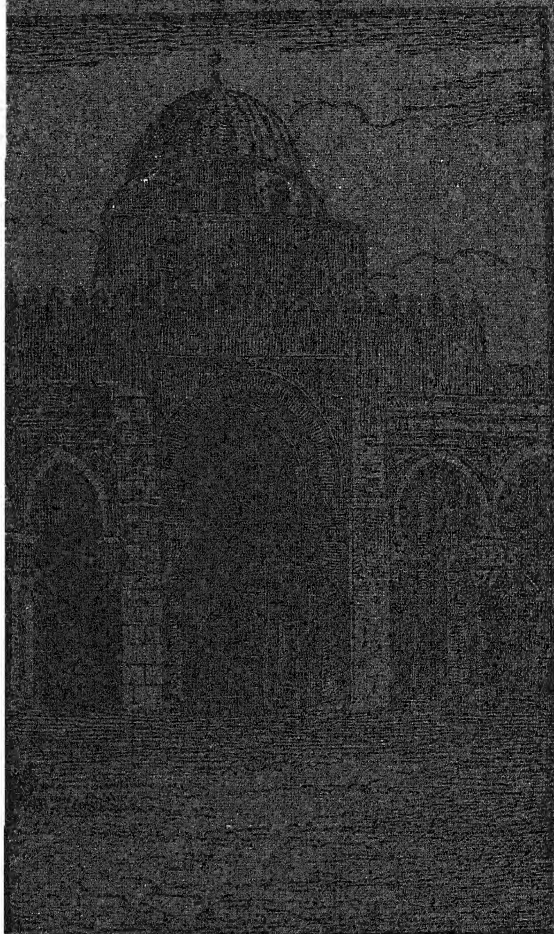


THE LAST PUNIC WAR

1636



AMSTERDAM

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TUNIS PAST AND PRESENT.



CHAPTER XXV.

A REVOLT IN THE CITY OF CUCUMBERS.

IN the middle of June M. Roustan was at Tunis busily engaged in advancing the interests of his friends and assuring M. Barthélémy Saint-Hilaire that "perfect tranquillity everywhere prevailed," and that the prospects were *couleur de rose* as regards the future. Mustapha was in Paris paving the way to his *Grand Cordon* by profuse assurances of friendship, and the President of the Republic was as pleased with his diamond *ahad*, as the Minister of Foreign Affairs was with his diamond *nichán*. One incident alone troubled the mind of the young Premier, and that was the obstinate refusal of M. Gambetta to enter in any shape the exalted ranks of Tunisian chivalry. Not even the

venerable emblem of the Hassanite family in brilliants could tempt the great Republican leader to bedeck himself with a Tunisian trophy.

Just as the proprietors of the Grand Hotel were getting somewhat weary of their Oriental guests, and just as M. Saint-Hilaire was furthering "the mission of civilisation" by making Mustapha, the ex-barber's apprentice, the colleague of half the sovereigns of Europe in the highest rank of the Legion of Honour, and was rewarding General Musalli for his complacency towards France and her Minister Resident by the cross of a Knight Commander, the Tunisian bubble burst in a moment, and Europe learned that French domination in Tunis meant the possession of the ground her soldiers stood on—and nothing more.

I am now going to tell the history of the national rising in Southern Tunis, according to the journal kept by an eye-witness, Mr. William Galea, who holds the post of British Vice-Consul at Susa, but who happened to be at Sfax during the outbreak, and played an important part in the events of which he speaks. Mr. Galea begins his diary on the 23d June 1881, with an account of his journey by land from Susa to Sfax.

"On Saturday the 18th June I started by carriage to travel along the coast as far as Sfax

(‘the City of Cucumbers’). When between Susa and the Roman amphitheatre of El Djem I sat down under an olive-tree while my horses were resting. In a few minutes about thirty Arabs of the Mitelit tribe, accompanied by two Sheikhs, gathered round me. They first wanted to know to what nation I belonged, and when I told them, their spokesman answered that ‘Englishmen were friends of the Arabs,’ and began to talk unreservedly of their feelings and intentions. ‘We are all ready to fight against the French,’ he said, ‘though we know quite well they are more powerful than we are; but at any rate we shall die gloriously and enter Paradise!’ He added that a deputation from the Hamáma, Zlass, and Neffet tribes had already asked their (the Mitelits’) co-operation in case the French troops should enter Kairwán or interfere with that portion of the country. They said also that they had secured the cordial support of the Mourabats (Almoravides) at Kairwán, and would all take the field as soon as they fixed on a competent leader. One of the Sheikhs mentioned that Ali Ben Hlifa (Caid of Neffet) had already declared himself on the side of the Arabs, and that the Bey had sent a commission, or *sengiak*, to each clan, consisting of ten irregular soldiers under a sergeant-major, to ascertain their intentions. As the persons

forming these commissions undoubtedly sympathise with the Arabs, they will as a matter of course echo the hackneyed phrase that 'tranquillity reigns everywhere,' and conceal what is really going on, if they do not actually promote it.

"After leaving El Djem I was surprised to see a Mitelit encampment of 300 tents close to the road. This unprecedented fact convinced me of the growing restlessness of the Arabs. When I got to Sfax I found telegrams from my correspondents informing me of the general alarm felt at all points on the coast, and particularly at the menacing attitude now assumed by the most turbulent tribes in the vicinity of the Tripolitan frontier. In some places it appeared that the Arabs had already lost their respect for the Bey, and were determined in any case to assert their independence. All my *esparto dépôts* were threatened, and the Arabs pretend they can now fix any price they like for the grass. So certain I am of a coming disaster that I am chartering as many ships as possible to save all the fibre I can. One of my ships at Gabes was in imminent danger of being fired at, under the mistaken notion that she was bringing French soldiers. The Bey has sent a proclamation to be read at Gabes, and one of my employers was present when this was done. As soon as the Sub-Governor had

finished reading it, all the people shouted out with one voice, ' We will know nothing more of the Bey, for he has become a Christian ; cursed be the Bey and his fathers, and the French and their fathers ! ' Nevertheless he wrote to Tunis the same evening that peace prevailed. The telegraph to Mahres has been cut, the poles have been burned, and the wire taken, under the mistaken impression that it can be used to make bullets of. Nobody would accompany the surveyor to mend it, so he has come to Sfax with his family. Under pressure, even the peaceful villagers of Mahres have agreed to fight for the common cause. The Hamáma have already attacked the Algerian Arabs and carried off a quantity of their camels and cattle.

"*June 24th* — This morning I learn that the revolution is determined upon. Ali Ben Hlifa has been elected the leader of the Arabs, but nobody knows if he acts thus from fear or of his own free will. It is impossible to tell in what direction the Arabs will make their first move, but they will certainly march on Sfax, Gabes, or Kairwán. There can be no doubt that the apparent calm is wholly deceptive, and that before long we shall be in the midst of massacre and bloodshed. The recent slight shocks of an earthquake which have been felt seem to confirm the Arabs as to their notions of French in-

fluence, and they are said to have been produced by the incantations of M. Sicard, M. Roustan's Consular Agent at Gabes, who is commonly reputed to be a wizard. This evening much alarm was occasioned by Giannino Mattei, the French Vice-Consul, sending all his family on board the Bey's ship in the roadstead."

I leave Mr. Galea's journal for a moment to describe the town of Sfax, which is the most important seat of commerce on the Tunisian coast. Situated at the north-eastern extremity of the gulf once known as the Syrtis Minor, "the City of Cucumbers" is built on a plain almost imperceptibly sloping towards the sea, and is surrounded by a narrow zone of sand beyond which is a second zone of fertile land containing an almost countless number of gardens and groves. Sfax, unlike Susa and other places on the coast, is divided into two distinct quarters, one inhabited by the Moslems, and the other by Christians and Jews. The one is wholly, and the second partially, protected by the usual crenellated battlement flanked by towers. The native town possesses two gates, one leading to the open country, and the other opening directly into the European *faubourg*, at the extremity of which are the batteries and a landing-place. Ships of any burden lie about two miles from the shore,

close to which a picturesque flotilla of fishing boats is generally anchored in the shallow sea. Water often fails in Sfax, and two enormous cisterns, maintained by the public charitable trusts and constructed a little to the north of the town, protect it from the dangers of drought. Five mosques, eight sanctuaries, a college, and several schools are to be found in the Arab quarter. Sfax was formerly the starting-point and destination of one of the caravans travelling to and from Central Africa, but this business came to an end with the slave-markets, and its inland commerce is now exclusively confined to the date-producing district and the city of Gafsa. The import and export trade of Sfax has of late years greatly increased, and it is chiefly in the hands of British merchants. At the time when the events of which I am writing occurred, the traffic in the paper-making fibre, commonly known as *halfa*, or esparto grass, seemed to hold out the prospect of an important future for Sfax ; but quite apart from this particular commodity, it receives large quantities of cloth, cotton goods, cutlery, iron, and planks, giving in return oil, almonds, pistaccio nuts, sponges, and wool.

The town and neighbourhood are singularly devoid of all archæological interest. Antiquities there are none, save and except a defaced cross of

the Maltese Order over a fountain. The religious buildings are mean, and only two of the mosques have lofty minarets. In the twelfth century Sfax was retaken by the Arabs from the Sicilians, who had conquered it under Roger the Norman, and four hundred years later it was occupied for a short time by the Spaniards. The population amounts to about 15,000 souls, of which 12,000 are Arabs, 1500 Tunisian Jews, 1000 Maltese, and 500 distributed amongst other European nationalities. Fewer Moors, perhaps, live in Sfax than in any other Tunisian seaport, and it is this predominance of Arab blood that accounts for the proverbially militant disposition of its Moslem inhabitants, where and whenever they believe their creed to be in danger.

This, then, was the place where Mr. Galea was writing his diary and shipping his esparto grass in June 1881, and so intelligently foresaw the events which were soon to occur.

On the evening of the 24th June Mr. Galea writes : —“ I believe we are in a very serious position here. The French appear to imagine they have attained their object, and gone away triumphantly, leaving the Arabs peaceful and contented. The fire, however, is certainly smouldering under the surface. I cannot really blame the Arabs, when they ask me how we should like to see our country taken by

aliens without striking a blow to defend it? The deputation (*sangiak*) sent by the Government to the Mehedeba tribe has just returned. As soon as the soldiers arrived at the camping-ground the Sheikhs said that 'the Bey of Tunis was dead to them,' and after giving them a meal, ordered them to return from whence they came. Two other similar commissions have been turned back by fractions of the Mitelit clan.

"*June 25th.*—To-day the Governor of Sfax, Caïd Hasouna Jelluli, summoned a meeting of the townsfolk, in which he told them that they must be prepared to defend both their own quarter and that of the Europeans against any invasion of the Arabs, observing that this had nothing to do with the French, who were to have no voice concerning Sfax, and that he would bring 200 Tunisian soldiers if they wished it. The citizens assured him that as long as the French kept away they would undertake the defence of the whole place.

"*June 26th.*—Matters do not seem to be mending. One of the Zlass Caïds arrested a Sheikh for using seditious language, whereupon the prisoner's relatives attacked the guards, using firearms. Two men were killed, and as soon as the Sheikh was liberated he and his party joined the insurgents, to use the term employed by the French to designate those Tuni-

ians who fight for their country. Both the Zlass and Mitelit tribes are, together with the Neffet, gradually approaching Sfax. I hear that our esparto yard at Grín has been plundered. Another of the Bey's reputations has fared very badly. It was sent to Gabes to see that the broken telegraph was mended, but the villagers of Shinni gave them a sound beating and told them to go back to the Bey. To-day several Beylical decrees arrived for the principal tribes and one for Sfax, to be read publicly. In it the Bey said the French troops were leaving his territory, that the Khamír affair was amicably settled, and enjoined the Sfaxians to pay the taxes peaceably, under pain of severe punishment.

"June 27th.—The French gunboat 'Chacal' arrived this morning, and the commander landed to pay a visit to Caid Jelluli. All the Gabes Jews have now come here, and say that numbers of Arab horsemen have arrived there, and that the Bash Mufti has recommended a general union to attack the French. It is rumoured that Tunisian forces are coming here on board a French frigate, under the Bashhamba (General in command of the Bey's irregular troops), who has been appointed Caid of the Mitelit.

"June 28th.—In the morning everything appeared as quiet as usual. I reached the esparto yard about eight A.M. After I had been there for a few minutes

A REVOLT IN THE CITY OF CUCUMBERS..

my servant came running from the town, saying that a revolution had broken out. As he was speaking to me I noticed crowds of Arabs, armed with every conceivable kind of weapon, hurrying down to the seaside. Mr. Leonardi had just telegraphed the turn things had taken to Mr. Reade at Tunis, when the wires were cut near where I was standing. In spite of all my efforts, the Arabs who were working for me decamped *en masse*—some to join the insurgents, others to look after their families. To add to the scene of confusion, the Arab women came on to the housetops and walls of the native town, making the well-known trilling, bird-like sound (in Arabic called *zahrít*), to encourage their husbands, sons, and brothers in the revolt. Several Hamáma tribesmen who were delivering esparto grass in the yard ran off, leaving both merchandise and money, crying out, ‘Let us fight the French, and gain heaven!’ Just then all the Consular flags were hoisted, but the French colours were again lowered almost immediately. We gave the key of the safe to our head Arab watchman, and collecting the books of the firm,* and accompanied by my faithful workmen as a bodyguard, made for the boats. Our men kept shouting out *Ingliz*, *Ingliz* (Englishmen), and this was a talisman for us

* Messrs. Perry, Bury, & Co. of Liverpool.

till we got down to the water's edge. Here an Arab rode at us with a drawn sword, but some of his co-religionists kept him back, declaring we were *real Englishmen* and should not be touched. At last we reached a boat, and got her off through the mud, for it was low water. All the Europeans were now busy putting their families on board the various small craft available; but on one of the 'Chacal's' boats approaching the jetty ten shots were fired at her. It was only the extreme prudence of the officer in not returning this fire, which prevented a general massacre of the fugitive Christians not yet embarked.

"Meanwhile Giannino, the French Vice-Consul, had reached the 'Chacal,' but he had been wounded in the arm during his flight. We went to the 'Genoese,' a British steamer, upon which our esparto grass was then being loaded. Later in the afternoon a boat came alongside full of fugitives. I then learned that the French tricolor had been removed by the mob, who also cut down the flag-staff, and that several of the more respectable inhabitants had exerted themselves to facilitate the departure of the Europeans. Alfred Solal, the Swedish Vice-Consul, and his brother were both wounded. Mr. Leonardi, the English Consul, had used every exertion to maintain order amongst the

Maltese at this trying moment. When the excitement of the stampede had a little subsided, I began to inquire into the immediate causes of the sudden outbreak. It now appeared that the Governor Jelluli had spread the report that the Bey's troops were coming, and as the Sfaxians considered the French and the Bey one and the same thing, they cried out, 'A holy war in the name of God!' and that they would allow none of the Tunisian soldiers to land. On seeing that all control of the mob was becoming impossible, the chief citizens warned the European colonists that it was time to be off. At the request of the captain of the 'Chacal,' I sent off the 'Genoese' to Susa with despatches and telegrams, stating what had happened, and we sought another asylum on board the Bey's steamer the 'Beshir,' that had arrived at Sfax two years ago, and becoming unseaworthy was obliged to stay there. All the ships lying off the town were so crowded that there was barely standing room, and the discomfort may be well imagined. After a more careful inquiry the foolish or knavish conduct of Jelluli became apparent. On the 27th it had already oozed out that the Bashhamba was coming there with Tunisian troops. As soon as this was known the principal townsfolk took counsel with the Bimbashi, or Colonel of artillery in

charge of the forts, and they all agreed that this was a trick of the Bey to get the batteries out of the hands of the Bimbashi into those of the Bashhamba. Resistance was immediately agreed upon, but Jelluli either knew nothing, or acted as if he was in total ignorance of what was going on. The next morning (the 28th) the Governor called the chief citizens to his house, but a mob of the common people was also allowed to be present. Jelluli* then began reading in an almost ironical tone, an *amra* or decree of the Bey, stating that fifty artillerymen and a Bashhamba were being sent 'to look after the forts.' He must certainly have known how such an announcement would be received. The Sfaxians all answered that their old Bimbashi, Muhamed Shareef,† was quite able to defend the city, that they would not allow any troops to land, and that they would resist any such measure till death. They ran out into the street in a body calling out, 'A holy war, a holy war!' and seizing on all the arms they came across, rushed down to the jetty and seabeach. To make matters worse, messengers had been sent the previous evening to invite the Arabs of the interior to come to

* Since made an officer of the Legion of Honour as a pendent to Mustapha's Grand Cordon and Musalli's Knight Commandership.

† Now a Major or Colonel in the Imperial Ottoman army.

Sfax; and as we were embarking, we saw them arriving, shouting, brandishing their weapons, and making all the disturbance they could. The revolution will now spread like wild-fire.

“*June 29th.*—We have passed an anxious night on the ‘Beshir,’ although the officers did what they could to make us comfortable, but now both water and provisions begin to run short. Several Arab servants we sent to procure them came back wounded, and the Maltese who went themselves did not fare better. Even the Moors who tried to protect any European were themselves at once severely handled. A Maltese boy was literally riddled with bullets and his remains afterwards kicked about the streets. At noon the ‘Mustapha,’ a French mail steamer, arrived in the roads, having placed on board a French frigate she met *en route* her freight of Tunisian soldiers. She is already overcrowded with passengers for Tunis. Mr. Leonard has gone to the French ironclad which has just arrived, to ask the commander to serve out provisions and water to the distressed British subjects. Mr. Leonardi is behaving nobly, not only rendering every assistance to the fugitives, but going on shore to try and supply their wants, when each journey becomes more and more dangerous both to life and limb. With glasses we can distinguish the clouds

of dust raised by troops of mounted Arabs entering the town.

“*June 30th.*—In the night a great meeting of Sfaxians and tribesmen was held. Jelluli was dismissed, the Beylical authority declared at an end, and Muhamed Shareef Bimbashi, named Bey and Commander-in-chief. It was stipulated that no more provisions or water were to be furnished to the fugitives, and that no Christian was to be allowed to land under pain of death. We can see the people moving the cannon on the batteries, it is supposed under the direction of the Bimbashi, and making walls and barricades of all my iron-bound bales of esparto-grass. A revolt has now broken out at Mahres, but Gabes is quiet as yet. The Bimbashi has suddenly become more conciliatory, or is trying to lay a trap for us: this morning (nine A.M.) he sent messengers to say that we might all go on shore and buy provisions. In fact, a boat came off to sell bread and a small quantity of water. A green flag has now been hoisted on the Marina battery, but all our national flags are still flying just as we left them in the hurry of departure. Later on, the S.S. ‘Manoubia’ arrived with 1000 Tunisian soldiers, and at two o’clock P.M. a boat went on shore carrying decrees of the Bey addressed both to Jelluli and the ecclesiastical authorities, asking the people

to receive the troops in a cordial manner. 'Yes,' answered the ex-Bimbashi, 'we will give them a warm welcome—with *gunshot*.' The officer was ordered to leave the place at once, and there are reports that Jelluli himself is a refugee in a sanctuary, as a party is desirous of holding him as a hostage to be killed as soon as any attack commences. At seven P.M. the 'Manoubia,' in uncertainty as to the intentions of her crew of discontented Tunisian soldiers, steamed out to anchor under the guns of the 'Alma,' a French frigate which had opportunely arrived during the crisis. The fugitives on board the 'Chacal' have been transferred to the 'Alma,' and the former boat has left for Susa with despatches. The Bimbashi's authority is now complete, the green standard of the Prophet has been solemnly saluted, he is greeted everywhere with cries of 'May God grant you victory!' and has distributed flint-lock guns and ammunition amongst the people. We are much surprised at the French leaving us all wholly unprotected in case of a night attack, but we extemporised a signal with a red lamp, and later the Vice-Consul Giannino brought us some rockets. All this was very well, but if we had been assailed by the Arabs, we should have been killed or taken prisoners before any assistance could have reached us. My agent at Zarat has

escaped from that place on a barque and joined m^e. He says that a great meeting of tribes has just taken place at the Matmata mountain, twenty-five miles south of Gabes, and that the Ouerghama, Ouerdna, Hemerna, Aleia, Hzim, Hoiea, and Beni Zid, have unanimously agreed to form an army and march up the coast, to either attack the towns, or force the inhabitants to make common cause with them against the invaders. Gabes will be first occupied, and then Sfax and Kairwán. As regards Sfax, the revolution cannot certainly be made more complete than it is already. Zerzis is in the hands of the Arabs, and although Jerba is quiet as yet, it appears that the Ouerghama have ordered the Accara (sponge-fishers) of Zerzis to prepare boats that they might land in Jerba and pillage it.

“*July 1st, 1881.*—To-day the Bimbashi sent off messengers to say that all our houses were carefully guarded and to ask if we required anything from them. About noon the ex-Governor, Sy Hassuna Jelluli, came on board accompanied by his nephew and clerks, and said the insurgents had at last decided to allow him to withdraw in safety. He says the Neffet tribe will reach the neighbourhood of Sfax to-morrow. Messengers again came in the afternoon to press us to return on shore, and assuring us that the quarrel of the Arabs was with the

Bey and the French, and no one else. For prudential reasons the invitation was not accepted. The encampments of the revolted tribes now line the coast on either side of the town. Towards evening the various consular agents were called on board the 'Alma,' and it transpired that a night attack on the Bey's two ships, upon which we had taken refuge, was meditated. The 'Beshir' and the 'Asad' were therefore taken in tow, and placed close to the frigate.

"*July 2d*—Ali Ben Hlifa arrived to-day with 200 horsemen. A number of the refugees left us, having obtained a passage on board the 'Italia' for Malta. My Gabes agent joined me this afternoon, being the last European to quit the place, but he has been obliged to leave all the property of our firm in the hands of the rebels, who, when he left, were calling out '*jihad, jihad*,' and threatening to kill any Frenchman who landed. M. Sicard, the supposed originator of the earthquakes, had a very narrow escape indeed.

"*July 3d*.—The Arabs have now formed a regular *Medjlis*, or tribunal of forty members, who are charged with the administration of justice and the maintenance of good order amongst the inhabitants in Sfax. I hear that the townspeople have sent their wives and children to the most

distant gardens, as they believe that the town will be destroyed in the inevitable bombardment, but nevertheless they are determined to fight to the last. Ali Ben Hlifa is now recognised as the leader of the revolted tribes. The Tunisian soldiers on the 'Manoubia' have almost openly revolted, and say they will not let the Sfaxians fight for their country alone. Many have jumped into the sea and tried to swim the four miles which intervene between the ships and the shore. Three were picked up by Moorish boats and safely landed. In the afternoon Jelluli sent a messenger to the Bimbashi, to urge on him to submit to the Bey, telling him that the Tunisian troops would otherwise be landed, and inviting him to hoist a white flag on the *kasba* in token of an affirmative answer. After sunset H.B.M.'s ships 'Monarch' and 'Condor' anchored in the roads, to the intense relief of the Maltese refugees.

"*July 4th.*—Early in the morning several Tunisian soldiers were detected swimming towards the shore, and a little later 100 of them were to our dismay placed on board the already-overcrowded Bey's steamers. Their mutinous spirit is so apparent that we are almost more afraid of them than of the Arabs in the town. Captain Tryon, C.B., of the 'Monarch,' has humanely ordered the distribution of water

and provisions to the needy of all nations amongst the fugitives. Moorish boats with eatables for sale hovered round the ships for a great part of the day.

“*July 5th.*—Ali Ben Hlifa yesterday sent messengers to all the coast towns explaining the action he had taken, and asking for aid. The Arabs are working hard at a ditch and other defences, and the Council of Forty condemns people to death for the smallest offences against person or property. It has been arranged that if an attack takes place, Muhamed Khemoun* will be president of the tribunal. All the carpenters in the town are employed in making carriages for the cannon, and relays of workmen are engaged in erecting a barricade across the front of the town. The Mitelit, Neffet, Zlass, Hamáma, and Ouerghama tribes now entirely surround the place, and other clans and fractions of clans have promised to join them, and are not far off. The chiefs exhibit letters promising not only the aid of the Tripoli tribes, *but of 10,000 Turkish troops.* A fearful responsibility rests on the authors of such communications, for the existence of which I can vouch. There is something to admire in the order preserved by the Sfaxians, although they are now in the wild excitement of a religious war; notwithstanding

* Now a fugitive at Malta.

that the agents of the Financial Commission have abandoned entirely the collection of all local and custom-house dues, the townspeople have actually continued to enforce their payment, and have appointed suitable persons to see that no injustice is committed in this respect. A large French troop-ship arrived to-day, with soldiers on board, and another French gunboat—the ‘Pique.’ The ‘Chacal’ and the boat just arrived are approaching the shore, and the storm of a bombardment is now about to burst on the devoted heads of the brave but ignorant defenders of the City of Cucumbers.”

CHAPTER XXVI.

THE SHELLING OF SFAX.

MY readers must suppose Mr. Galea watching anxiously the operations of the French from the deck of the 'Beshir,' and recording what took place in the journal to which I now return.

"*July 5th, 1881, 4.10 P.M.*—The 'Chacal' first began to bombard the town from a distance of about 2000 yards from the jetty, and the 'Pique' commenced firing an hour later. The Bimbashi is replying gallantly enough, but all his shot are falling short. Shells are being chiefly directed against the forts between the European *faubourg* and the shore. At last a shot from the town actually passed between the masts of the 'Pique,' and shortly afterwards both ships withdrew to the outer anchorage. As far as I can see, the shore battery is nearly dismantled and the pier much damaged. At Captain Tryon's suggestion a large number of the fugitives are leaving for Malta in the S.S. 'Peninsulaire,' for there is literally nothing

more for them to live on here. The French fired fifty-four shots and the Tunisians seventeen this evening.

“*July 6th.*—At daybreak the ‘Alma’ and the ‘Reine Blanche’ (which had also arrived) got as close to the shore as they could, and at 5.45 A.M. began throwing shells to the west of the Arab town from a distance of two miles. The town made no reply, and firing ceased at 9 A.M. At noon all four ships joined in the bombardment and a brisk fire was continued for three hours. Only six shots (all falling short) were fired from the batteries, which the gunboats endeavoured to silence. Although 141 shells were thrown into the place, the *enceinte* facing the sea does not seem to be visibly damaged. About 4.30 P.M. the ‘Léopard’ arrived and joined the other gunboats at the inner anchorage.

“*July 7th.*—A desultory fire was maintained in the morning, and the injuries to the buildings can be seen clearly enough through a telescope. Later on, some steam-launches with marines on board approached the shore, but they were at once fired at from the forts and were obliged to retire. The ships then recommenced the bombardment, and when it grew dusk the launches once more went close to the town, but being received with volleys

of musketry again withdrew. It turns out that very few French troops are really here, and there can be no doubt that the assault is being carried on in the most unsatisfactory manner. The failures to effect a landing will not only encourage the Sfaxian Arabs, but those in the other coast towns, where the proceedings are being most anxiously watched with a view to decide on the position to be assumed.

“*July 8th.*—The French are again reconnoitring near the shore. From time to time a shot is fired, and the townspeople answer at intervals, but in an apparently hopeless manner.

“*July 9th.*—Sfax is one of the few places in the Mediterranean where the tide ebbs and flows. When the tide was full shortly after midnight, some Maltese, on behalf of the French, went close to the shore and cut out and brought away some boats suitable for use in landing the troops. Although the watch-dogs barked loudly, no one took any notice of them, and it seems as if the town could be taken by assault, or at any rate the guns spiked with impunity. All day the French have been collecting empty boats round their men-of-war, varying this occupation by firing an occasional shell. In the afternoon all the Tunisian troops were crowded into the ‘Manoubia’ and taken back to Tunis, to swell in

all probability the ranks of the malcontents around the capital.

“*July 10th.*—Not a shot was fired all day. The Italian gunboat ‘Cariddi’ arrived to see if anything was needed by the Italian fugitives. Another small French gunboat also came in.

“*July 11th.*—Nothing done to-day. The inaction is evidently encouraging the Arabs, and I am sorry to see the fortifications and barricades being repaired and strengthened with my esparto bales.

“*July 12th.*—This day was also passed in inactivity. I received the news from Gabes that the Arab captain of one of my barques has been arrested and sent a prisoner to Ali Ben Hlifa, because he had some barrels in his boat which were supposed to indicate an intention of obtaining supplies of water for the French.

“*July 13th.*—At last we have some hopes that matters are to be pushed vigorously to a conclusion. This morning the man-of-war ‘Galissonnière’ and another transport arrived. The former, at 2 P.M., threw a dozen shells into the town. In the evening the quarter near the gate dividing the Moorish from the European *faubourg* was seen to be on fire, but it was soon extinguished, or burnt itself out.

“*July 14th.*—In the forenoon six French men-of-war (the ‘Colbert,’ ‘Trident,’ ‘Marengo,’ ‘Surveil-

lante,' 'Révanche,' and 'Friedland,' together with a despatch boat (the 'Desaix'), anchored in the roads. Salutes were fired, and much bunting was displayed during the day, on account of the *Fête de la République*. In the afternoon all the ironclads came as close as the depth of water would permit to the shore; but the attack was still postponed.

"*July 15th.*—The gunboats ('Chacal,' 'Pique,' 'Léopard,' 'Gladiateur,' and 'Hyène') shifted their position a little at dawn, and shortly after sunrise the French fleet, including even the ironclads four nautical miles away, began to shell the city and neighbourhood. There does not, however, seem to be any sign of landing. The delay has not only encouraged the Arabs here, but it has promoted the interests of the revolutionary party throughout the Regency. If a prompt and decisive blow had been struck at Sfax, the whole movement might have been nipped in the bud. The siege should never have begun until the French forces were mustered in sufficient strength and numbers to win a rapid and brilliant victory. Before noon to-day, 300 shots had fallen in different parts of the town. All the needy Maltese refugees are being furnished with supplies from H.M.S. 'Monarch,' and the commanders of the French frigates are following the example set by Captain Tryon. The bombardment was resumed

towards evening, and continued nearly all night; sleep became impossible from the constant booming of the cannon, and the sky seemed fairly a-blaze.

“*July 16th.*—After this terrible work of destruction had continued for twenty-four hours, the French troops landed in great force at break of day this morning, under cover of a heavy fire from the fleet. It required two hours’ fighting to gain possession of the fortifications, and even then the struggle was indefinitely prolonged in outlying houses and hamlets. By mid-day all was comparatively quiet. At the time of the landing, the esparto yards of two or three merchants were in flames; but our stores do not appear to have taken fire. Various estimates as to the loss on both sides have been made, but no two agree. Over a dozen French soldiers and marines, including an officer, have been interred in the Christian burial-ground, but others have shared undoubtedly a common grave with the Arabs in the trenches before the town. The resistance was as brave as it was hopeless, but no amount of personal courage can compensate for the use of weapons fit only for old metal-dealers or curiosity shops. In the narrow streets of the native town, house after house was only occupied after a desperate hand-to-hand conflict.”

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*The sequel to the fall of Sfax I shall tell in the next chapter. There can be little question but that the delay in effecting the capture of the city to a great extent destroyed the moral effect of the achievement when it really did take place ; instead of being the end and extinction of the insurrection, it became, as it were, the beginning of a race contest, the termination of which is still apparently in the future.

A humble poet has already sung the siege of Sfax. An honest tar, by name John Root, united on board H.M.S. "Monarch" the functions of able seaman and poetaster. On returning to Malta he published his "Bombardment of Sfax" in a leaflet, entitled "Thoughts and Facts from a Sailor's Pen," and if John's quantities are somewhat rough and eccentric, his appreciations of what he saw are almost as correct as Mr. Galea's. I quote a few verses, which tell quaintly enough in a few words the tale of the sad fate of Sfax :—

"More able pens than mine will tell
How Frenchmen fought and Arabs fell,
Mown down by showers of shot and shell,
When Sfax town was bombarded.

"Seven days the game was going on,
Not one thought it could last so long ;
'Twas never thought by any one
The Arabs thus would stand it.

“At last the French its capture plann’d,
One morning early boats were mann’d,
The ships fired fast, but few could stand—
The boats were fast advancing;

“And when the boats got near the shore,
They shot and shell did likewise pour;
And added theirs to louder roar,
All death and slaughter dealing.

“Each Arab stuck well to his gun,
’Twere better had he cut and run;
His last he’d looked towards the sun
For Hotchkiss guns now faced him.

“Beneath such storms of shot and shell
All owned the Mussulman fought well;
And many French that day had fell
Had Arabs better weapons.”

CHAPTER XXVII.

LOOT.

MR. GALEA once more comes to my assistance and lends me his journal to write the story of the sad sequel to the capitulation of Sfax. My readers must remember that he was an eye-witness of most of the facts to which he speaks, and in justice to him I must say that his narrative is fully borne out and corroborated, not only by Mr. Consular-Agent Leonardi's official reports, but by a mass of evidence tendered before the International Commission appointed to investigate the circumstances on the spot. If this were not the case, I would willingly pass over in silence the disagreeable subject of the sacking which followed the shelling, and which has given rise to so much heart-burning on all sides. Loot in the hour of victory was not first invented at Sfax, its occurrence is the rule rather than the exception in the annals of warfare, and as few countries can fairly throw a stone in the matter, I fail to see that it in any way

involves the national honour of France, or affects the reputation of anybody beyond those immediately concerned in the incident I am about to speak of. There can be no doubt whatever that the French soldiers who drove the Arabs out of Sfax on the 16th July 1881, followed up their triumph by an almost indiscriminate pillage of both the European and Arab quarters of the town. What was done happened in the face of day, and can neither be gainsaid or denied, and the subsequent attempts to minimise the transaction were at once unworthy and useless. Still more so is it censurable, to have postponed the relief of the sufferers indefinitely, and to endeavour to wring the compensation from the Arabs, who are nearly all the debtors of the persons who have been more or less ruined by the events in question. To my mind, these things are a far greater blemish to the good name of France than the excesses committed by her troops in the flush of success or the intoxication of conquest. With those few observations I return to Mr. Galea's diary :—

“*July 17th.*—This morning I went on shore, accompanied by my assistant, Mr. Leadbetter, and the master of the British ship ‘Agnes.’ My first visit (after attending the funeral of some of the French soldiers who had been killed) was paid, naturally

enough, to my own business establishment. Everything movable had disappeared, and the yard was occupied by the French troops. Leaving the place, we next entered the European *faubourg*. Most of the houses were much damaged and knocked about by the shells, but on the pretext that some Arabs had fired from the dwelling of Mr. Gili (a Maltese merchant), an order had been given to break open the doors of every habitation in the quarter, and as soon as this was done a general pillage ensued. I was the unwilling witness of all that happened. The soldiers took or spoiled everything they could carry away, and broke or defaced what they were unable to move. None of the officers seemed at all disposed to interfere, and the whole business was a sad contrast to the measures taken by the insurgents to preserve our property, and was the more unjustifiable, as the Moorish quarter afforded a sufficiency of *butin*. The loss will of course fall on the British colony, and is a sad and unexpected aggravation of our privations during the past fortnight. Several liquor stores were emptied of their contents, and all I can say is that it is fortunate the Arabs did not resume the contest.

“*July 18th.*—The loot continues unabated. An order has been issued forbidding soldiers to enter houses unauthorised, but nobody attends to it, nor

is any attempt made to enforce it. I am, however, taking careful note of all that happens connected with this ruinous business. Caid Jelluli has not left the 'Alma,' but he has sent a letter, telling the Cadi and Mufti to come on board, at the head of a deputation of forty preceded by a white flag, to treat for terms, and informing them that unless they do so, the French will march into the gardens and attack everybody they come across.

"*July 19th.*—This morning I went to visit the great mosque. Its minaret is disabled, and it is turned into a barrack. I saw the soldiers cooking in various parts of it. Throughout the Moorish town the traces of the sack were painful to witness. What was not carried away from the shops in the bazaars, was thrown out into the streets. I saw title-deeds, bonds, and valuable papers lying amidst heaps of groceries and piles of stuffs. Although the former could never be replaced, and their loss might injure Moors and Christians alike, several of these miscellaneous collections of litter were deliberately set on fire. Valuable Arabic MSS. were torn up and their pages distributed as souvenirs of the siege—and, I presume, the sacking—of Sfax.

"*July 20th.*—The deputation demanded by Jelluli went out to the 'Alma,' and I believe all the Moors

who will bring their families are to be allowed to return. At any rate in the evening several of the native residents perambulated the Arab town calling out in a loud voice that all persons concealed were to come out, and that those who did so would be safe. Some eighty men were collected by this means, and then conveyed as prisoners on board the men-of-war. Three houses, the inmates of which declined to comply with the invitation thus given, *were mined and blown up*. It is only now that one can gradually obtain details of what really happened on the eventful 16th July. In addition to the struggle in the town, it appears that there was a regular battle fought in the country outside it. Many well-known Arab chiefs died fighting bravely; Ghasim Ben Shirouda, lately Hlifa of the Mitelit, his brother Sheikh Salah, Ali Ben Ardorri, son of a Hlifa, Sheikh Sesi Ben Muhamed, Sheikh Seyd Ben Muhamed, and Muhamed Ben Hdir were all shot down. In this engagement the Neffet were commanded by Ali Ben Hlifa, and the Beni Zid by Sherif-ed-Din. The Mitelit were led by Ardorri Ben Amor. These tribes alone took an actual part in the engagement.

“July 22d.—The mosque has been restored to the townspeople, but they seem in no hurry to take it. It will require a great deal of cleansing, and there

is an unexploded shell still in the top of the damaged minaret, which indisposes the *muezzin* to make the usual calls to prayer.

“*July 24th.*—The French fleet (except the ‘Alma’) left for Gabes, and H.M.S. ‘Monarch’ for Susa.

“*July 25th.*—We received to-day news of the occupation of Gabes yesterday. The inhabitants of the two villages near the shore, Giara and Menzel, have always hated each other, and generally differed in politics. In the present instance the former declared for the French, and the latter for the Holy War and the Prophet. After throwing some shells into Menzel, the French landed and occupied it. There was only a faint resistance from the insurgents amongst the palm-trees. Before evacuating the place the Arabs killed five Jews who had remained there. Later in the day the French troops left Menzel and encamped on the sea-shore, as they were not in sufficient force to resist an attack which was apparently meditated. No sooner had the French quitted it, than the Arabs returned, and set fire to most of the houses in the place. Menzel was therefore twice occupied by the insurgents and once by the French in a single day. The *Kisla* or castle of Gabes, an isolated fort between Menzel and the sea, surrendered in the morning. The officer in charge and his prisoner, the well-

known Alela Bizzai,* were received on board the men-of-war. No sooner had the French left the *Kisla*, than the Arabs rushed into it to seize the guns and powder. A few minutes after they entered it, a terrific explosion took place, and 300 persons at least were buried beneath the ruins or blown to pieces. The causes of this disaster are not precisely known, but it is supposed that one of the shells, which had been thrown into it prior to the exhibition of a white flag, suddenly burst, and ignited the gunpowder contained in a store beneath the fort. At the very same time (July 24th), 1000 French soldiers landed in the island of Jerba without exciting any hostile demonstration. The fort was surrendered at once, and the French flag hoisted upon it. Several Maltese families, who have for some weeks been living afloat, were now enabled to return to their homes.

“*July 29th.*—News reached Sfax to-day that Sheikh Khemoun, with the Bimbashi and some other persons, who had taken a prominent part in the de-

* This person was the confidential servant of the Prime Minister Mustapha down to a few days after the 12th May. It was the dinner given to the Foreign Representatives at this man's house which furnished Signor Pestalozza with the material for the only amusing article in the ill-fated *Mostakel*. Although he had worked very hard in the French interest he managed to offend M. Roustan, and was degraded, deprived of all his possessions, and detained in a dungeon at Gabes, till he was liberated by the French shells.

fence of the town, were proceeding to Tripoli overland. Caid Jelluli has now returned to the post from which he was ejected by the Bimbashi, but under a salute from the forts, and through a lane of French soldiers. He says he is resting, and cannot attend to public business. I am sorry to say that even now both wanton destruction of property and pillaging are still going on. As I am sure that this matter must sooner or later become the subject of much controversy, I shall write down some observations about it. In the first place, the care taken by the Arabs to protect property, after our departure, was a matter of public notoriety, as well as the draconic justice done by the Council of Forty. All houses occupied immediately after the landing by conscientious and respectable French officers were restored to their owners undisturbed, so much so that in one of them some money and jewellery were actually found on the table. A French doctor, who, as soon as he heard the fatal order to pillage, ran to his house and hung out a tricolour flag from the window, escaped without any loss, and the protection given him was also extended to a warehouse which happened to form the ground-floor of the building. Again, the telegraph office was not even touched, which would certainly not have been the case if the Arabs had commenced to destroy property

in the European quarter, nor would many stores of grain and oil (favourite object of Arab raids) have remained intact. On the 17th July, when we first landed, we all saw the soldiers with our own eyes entering shops and stores, and either looting or destroying everything they came across. As in the case of the Arab town, the streets were littered with heavy merchandise and papers of all descriptions, including business books, obligations, &c., and on the following day, to make matters worse, these heaps were carried out of the gates and burnt. Two days later, the notice of the colonel against pillage was issued, but it only diminished the looting and made it more secret. On the 21st July, Mr. Montebello, accompanied by Mr. Leadbetter, went to visit a shop belonging to the former, and found that, the door having been forced, a number of soldiers were helping themselves to its contents. A sentinel looked in and said nothing. An officer was sent for, but he confined his action to telling the sentinel not to let any more soldiers enter the place. Mr. Cardona made similar complaints as to what had happened in his warehouse. When Mr. Leadbetter examined one of our own houses on the 17th July, he found the strong-box, his desk, and books untouched. Returning two days later, he was surprised to see the safe thrown down and

forced, his desk rifled, and two soldiers playing with a valuable sewing-machine. He then endeavoured to prevent further damage by getting the doors sealed up, but on the 22d July he again found the seal broken and many other objects, including his clothes, gone. On the 30th July, *ten days after the landing*, I saw Mr. Consular-Agent Leonardi's house being rummaged by soldiers, while at the same time their comrades had turned the square in front of the half-demolished Christian church into a loot bazaar. This traffic was witnessed by me from the first day of the occupation. Tunisian money was exchanged for napoleons at a loss of 40 per cent. ; and I saw the Austrian Consul's uniform sold for a mere trifle. The head of the custom-house informed me that the building was deliberately looted, notwithstanding his appeals to obtain its immunity as a public institution. When I asked him about this some days after, he was prudently reticent. There were many refugees on board the 'Alma' who saw the French writing letters on the valuable stamped paper, and when the marines exhibited their spoils, there was a pretty general chorus of 'There are my books,' 'There are my clothes,' and 'There are my pictures,' on the part of the victims. I have already described the measures taken by the Arabs to preserve order and

respect for the rights of property, even to the extent of insuring the continued payment of the Government dues, and it seems to me that if they had once commenced to pillage, everything would have been carried away into the interior. Another wanton waste caused by the French garrison is the indiscriminate destruction of everything which can possibly be burned. The item fuel seems not even to enter into the calculations of the French commissariat, and anything handy is at once chopped up to supply the want. The damage thus done has been enormous, whereas supplies of firewood are obtainable in the gardens quite close to the town. A great deal has been made of the discovery of some boxes belonging to M. Mattei in the house of Sheikh Khemoun, but they were unopened, untouched, and evidently brought there for fear, lest the mob might not be over-scrupulous in the matter of French property. Besides scores of eye-witnesses, there is other testimony as to nothing having happened before the landing. A Moor, by name Hāj Hmed Maala, found that a Maltese gardener and his large family, who lived in an outlying garden belonging to Mr. Gili, were in imminent danger, so he dressed them in Arab clothes and concealed them in his own country-house till he was able, after the capture of the place, to deliver

them up to Mr. Leonardi. This man (the Maltese gardener) says, that when the Arabs wished to pillage the European suburb, they were prevented from doing so by the action of the townspeople. The old bell-ringer of the Christian church lived all through the siege in a hole beneath the staircase of the tower, and was fed by the Arabs, who, he says, treated him kindly, and did no harm to anything. Their stories are fully confirmed by a number of Jews who lived on shore the whole time, and who were injured as regards neither their persons nor their property. In short, the Maltese colonists of Sfax have been the chief sufferers by the pillage of the town, committed in the manner I have described. Some of them have indeed lost their all; hardly one has escaped unscathed. As an eye-witness I have recorded what really happened in broad daylight and in the sight of hundreds of people. The only hope of the half-ruined British community is in the support which they feel sure their claims must inevitably receive from the English Government, and in the justice and equity of the International Commission which we hear is to inquire into the whole matter."

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One of the most disinterested witnesses of the sacking of Sfax is the poet before-the-mast, John

Root. I am not aware whether he was examined by the commissioners, but he writes with an evident knowledge of what took place :—

“And now comes stain on victor’s name,
The town is pillaged for their gain ;
They rob the houses of the slain,
And strew the streets with plunder.

“The merchandise is thrown about,
Bazaars and shops turned inside out—
A scene of plunder and of rout,
All hands seemed bent on mischief.

“E’en fav’rite mosque, where day and night
The Moslems prayed for Prophet’s light,
To show them to do what was right,
Did not escape the pillage.

“If ’mid the plunder Arab’s face
Were seen, from French he had no grace,
No matter who or in what place,
He fell a corpse that moment.

“Thus while their goods in streets are thrown,
Their souls are to the Prophet gone,
For defending their own hearth and home
’Gainst Christian invader.”

As I said before, the stamp of truth in John Root’s writings amply atones for his rugged metre and peculiar rhyme.

The International Commission at Sfax is now also a matter of history. It was composed of

Captain Count Marquesac of the "Reine Blanche," President ; General Sy Muhamed Jelluli ; Captain Tryon, C.B., of H.M.S. "Monarch;" and Captain Conti of the Italian frigate, "Maria Pia." After sitting for several weeks it was abruptly dissolved in October, because apparently the English and Italian members were unable to avoid the inevitable conclusion as to the authors of all the mischief. At the beginning of the present year, the Arabs of Sfax were compelled to contribute to a heavy "war indemnity." Most of them were already the debtors of the much impoverished Maltese merchants, and the levy in question effectually prevented their satisfying the creditors for an indefinite period. In the result the Maltese first lost their goods, and then the possibility of obtaining the payment of their just debts. It is almost incredible, but it is nevertheless true, that notwithstanding the numerous sittings of the Commission, and the fact that the sums since collected have been very considerable, up to the present time not a single farthing of compensation has been paid to the unfortunate persons, who, after watching the shelling of their houses and shops for a fortnight from a distance, only returned to find them pillaged by the very people who professed not only to protect them, but to be the pioneers of a sentimental mission of political civilisation.

Before going back to Northern Tunis I wish to bring the history of events on the southern coast down to the time of my own visit there at the end of November 1881. The French now occupied the town of Sfax, a spot on the sea-coast at Gabes, and the island of Jerba, but this was all. Outside these places the Arabs held undisputed sway, and no peaceful citizen could go beyond the French camps with impunity. The interval between August and November was passed chiefly in fruitless *reconnaissances* on the part of the French, and daring raids and night attacks on the side of the Arabs. As early as the 31st July it became again necessary to engage the Arabs in force at the village of Menzel. General Logerot's arrival did not mend matters. The villagers of Giara, who had done nothing at all, and had "received the French as brothers," were fined 20,000 francs, and ordered to induce their co-religionists at Menzel to submit to the French, under pain of a fresh bombardment and the destruction of the great *Kouba* of Sidi Bulbeba on the neighbouring hill. As there was nothing left to bombard in Menzel, and as everything valuable had been taken away from the shrine of Sidi Bulbeba except his bones, the insurgents only laughed at the menaces. There were now over 3000 troops at Gabes, and the weather was oppres-

sively hot, yet they were unable to establish communication with the freshwater springs three miles off, and were compelled to drink the ooze of the muddy river, which was impregnated with magnesia and soon engendered dysentery and fever. All stragglers from the French camps were pitilessly massacred, and the sentries were often shot on guard. "On the night of the 10th August," writes Mr. Galea, "the Arabs surprised the French camp, cut down the sentries and began killing the soldiers as they lay asleep. Before anything could be done they had rapidly retreated. The French admit a loss of twenty killed, but I have been told privately that it really exceeded that number." Sickness broke out both at Sfax and Jerba, decimating in a terrible manner the garrison in the last-named island. Raid after raid took place around Sfax, but beyond shooting two obscure individuals on the 27th August on an equivocal charge preferred by the Vice-Consul Giannino, of calling out *jihad*, *jihad* (Holy War), very little was done. At times the insurgents approached so near to the town that they could be fired upon from the walls, and as soon as any tribe made terms with the French, it was immediately attacked by the insurgents. The "friendly Arabs" used to bring their dead and wounded as far as the ramparts, and cry in vain for help and assistance.

If it was General Winter who defeated the first Napoleon in Russia, it was certainly General Summer who now came to the assistance of the Arabs in Southern Tunis, with dysentery and typhoid fever as his aides-de-camp. While MM. Ferry and Saint-Hilaire were prudently consulting *bourgeois* susceptibilities by hastening on the elections to the French Chambers, while M. Roustan was obtaining concessions for his friends, and telegraphing reassuring platitudes to the Foreign Office, and while the Agence Havas was informing the French public that "our troops found the village abandoned, and returned to Susa, bringing with them a few hens, five cows, and five prisoners." "It was a splendid operation," it is added, "perfectly well conducted, and one which does the greatest honour to our young troops" ("Daily News," October 3d, 1881),—the whole of Southern Tunis was abandoned to the most appalling anarchy and disorder, while the greater part of the northern part of the Regency was quickly preparing to follow suit.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

ALARMS AT THE CAPITAL.

IN the early days of July, M. Roustan succeeded in bringing to a luxurious villa at the Marsa a powerful and zealous ally. At his suggestion, and through French influence, Monseigneur Charles Martial Allemand Lavigerie, Archbishop of Algiers, superseded Monsignore Fra Fedele Suter, Bishop of Rosalia *in partibus*, as Apostolic Administrator of Carthage and Tunis. Archbishop Lavigerie was essentially a *prélat de combat*, and his militant missionaries have been for several years gradually gaining influence in Algeria, Tunis, and even Tripoli. The French Government could not possibly have obtained more useful and uncompromising auxiliaries than these white-robed and red-capped *frères d'Afrique*, who, under the harmless garb of theology, pill-making, and tooth-drawing, are preparing the path for French conquests in the unexplored regions of the Sahara. The practical head of an eminently practical con-

fluently, Archbishop Lavigerie had been initiated, by a prolonged residence at the Vatican, into the useful art of combining doctrine and politics, and came to Tunis fully determined to acquire a lion's share in the powers of the Protectorate. Such was the enthusiasm with which he was endowed, that three years before, he had succeeded in reducing even the crown of martyrdom to the matter-of-fact condition of a marketable commodity. In the quarterly issue of the *Bulletin de l'Œuvre de Saint-Augustin* for January 1878, I find him publishing the following notice: "*Adoptions of Missionaries.*—Our associates are aware that by paying the sum of 800 francs, they can support for a year a missionary in Africa. They become in this manner partners in his works and meritorious actions, *as well as in his crown of martyrdom*, as happened in the case of the charitable benefactors, who adopted the three missionaries who died for the faith *on their road to Timbuctoo.*" While the Pope is sending a Cardinal's hat to the pioneer of French influence and martyrdom-by-proxy in North Africa, the Pacha of Tripoli is threatened with an incursion of French cavalry (not indeed to punish the Khamírs), but to chastise the Towaregs on account of the untimely fate of three other missionaries, who, notwithstanding the

most explicit warnings, insisted on travelling from Ghadâmes to Ghât. This peculiar feature of French policy was clearly foreshadowed and described in the correspondence of Sir Thomas Reade nearly forty years ago ; and to such an extent has it been now carried that the Bey, the French Resident, and the Cardinal Archbishop may, at the present moment, be correctly described as the governing triumvirate of that portion of the Regency of Tunis which is not in the hands of the insurgents. Before the summer heat had fairly set in, M. Roustan had rewarded his friends, harassed his enemies, and reassured M. Saint-Hilaire ; but the unexpected outbreak, in the early days of July, of a widespread revolution throughout the length and breadth of the Regency, entailed a very serious interruption in his plans, as well as in those of his political superiors.

First came the risings at Sfax, Gabes, and Jerba, of which I have already spoken at length. On the 4th July, information reached Tunis that the Arabs near Monastir had already defied the Bey's authority, and had murdered three Europeans in a neighbouring village. The same evening the French Captain Mattei was assassinated close to the Bey's palace and the Manouba camp. His murderer managed to escape, but an innocent Arab

paid the penalty of the crime. The unfortunate boy, who was shot by mistake, is buried in the ditch near which he fell, and his mother is a raving lunatic in the Arab madhouse. The complications, however, did not seem to disturb at once the unlimited power wielded by M. Roustan. It was just now that he interfered to prevent the sale of landed property by an English subject to French bankers, because his consent was not previously obtained to the transaction. The matter was denied at the time, but the fact rests on the testimony of M. Valensi, the representative of the legendary French colony, and the zealous framer of chronic addresses in favour of M. Roustan, and who himself telegraphed to this effect to the would-be purchaser.

Every day the news of some fresh accession to the ranks of the rebels reached the Bardo. On the 18th July, while the Bey was listening to the details of the capture of his "faithful town of Sfax," a band of 800 men belonging to the Zlass tribe, carried off 2000 of the royal camels from their pasture-lands, not two miles from the Manouba camp and the Kasr-es-Said gardens. A posse of Arab cavalry entered Kairwán and collected *vi et armis* the public taxes, while another party invaded the Enfida and settled for themselves the

vexed question of Hanafee and Melaki, by driving everybody out of it. Raids on the farms surrounding Tunis now became of daily occurrence, and at this juncture the Prime Minister Mustapha hurried back to Tunis as fast as a despatch-boat could carry him. But the position grew daily more and more serious; the Tunisian soldiers who had cheered in the very presence of the French at each halting shot fired by the Bimbashi of Sfax, came back to their quarters at the capital only to desert. The Bey was now urged to adopt the very remedy which had been ridiculed by M. Roustan four months before. He was told to call out the native army and form "a camp," but his power and influence were both hopelessly ruined, and he was regarded as a traitor and a coward by every honest man amongst his subjects. Even while M. Roustan and General Logerot were elaborating their plans of a Tunisian expedition, hundreds of the rough Arab soldiers were taking their road southwards, calling out to every one they met, "We will fight for Ali Ben Hlifa and the Sultan." The truth could no longer be ignored; revolution and anarchy now prevailed both in Southern and Central Tunis. French troops were every day returning to the Regency, but the heat still favoured the Arabs. On the 24th July half the Bey's bodyguard was

missing, and the farm of Mustapha between Mater and Bizerta in Northern Tunis was pillaged by Arab cavalry. Under these circumstances Sy Ali Bey, now civilised and friendly, found the task of organising a native force one of peculiar delicacy and difficulty. The soldiers, who had not as yet actually deserted, were far more likely to keep him as a hostage or convey him against his will to the tents of Ali Ben Hlifa, than to join him in attacking their comrades or co-religionists, for whose proceedings they entertained a lively sympathy.

On the 26th July a band of insurgents could be seen approaching Rades, which, as I have said before, is equally visible from Tunis and Goletta. A panic seized on the inhabitants of both places; business was suspended, shops closed, boats hired, and a general stampede prepared. The Bey ordered the bridge between Goletta and Rades to be broken down, and the passage to be guarded by artillery. A little later in the day the news came that a well-known Greek gentleman had been murdered in an outlying farm. The excitement then reached its culminating point, and an Arab attack was really apprehended. People in Tunis decided to fly to Goletta, and persons in Goletta determined to take refuge in Tunis. A crowd of Tunisian fugitives arrived by train at Goletta, but

only to meet another mob of refugees waiting impatiently to take the return train to Tunis. The meeting of the two crowds formed a very amusing *tableau*, and the more so because a moment's reflection must show that any attempt to invade two walled towns by the Arabs of the interior would be wholly out of the question.

Up to the present time the Tunisian difficulty, as far as Europe was concerned, had only affected two platonic overthrows of the Italian Cabinet: in France everything had gone smoothly, and the Treaty of Kasr-es-Said had been ratified almost by acclamation. The tide, however, had now turned, and MM. Ferry and Saint-Hilaire knew it; the expedition, shorn of its tinsel and trappings, was becoming day by day more unpopular, and the opinion was fast gaining ground that the French Protectorate over Tunis was a white elephant of a very costly and unmanageable character. The time was at hand when Tunis was to become an unmistakable factor in the politics of France, and to make matters worse, Bou Amema was threatening simultaneously a very serious disturbance in Algeria. The general elections were already fixed for the 14th September, but if things meanwhile grew worse in Tunis and Algeria a disaster might pretty confidently be anticipated. It was therefore

decided to hasten the elections by a full month. "If in September," wrote M. De Blowitz, now completely disenchanted, on the 27th July, "the country were confronted with a serious African campaign, the elections might be seriously compromised, and a formidable argument afforded to the Opposition. Consequently, notwithstanding all prior arrangements, it was decided that the elections should be held without delay, before any African troubles had time to break out."

On the very same day, the town of Hammamet, fifty miles from Tunis, underwent an "African trouble" of a very disagreeable nature. It was attacked by Arab horsemen, who carried all the cattle belonging to its inhabitants away into the mountains, and pillaged a house belonging to the British Consular Agent, Mr. Cacchia, who was doomed to be one of the greatest losers by the insurrection. The fast of Ramadan now began, but the Bey reflected on the possibility of sharing the fate of his camels, and decided, for the first time in his reign, to spend the month in the comparative security of the pavilion on piles at Goletta. Up to this time only 400 irregular militia could be collected to form the nucleus of Sy Ali Bey's contingent, and the regular army was reduced to about fourscore men. On the last day

of July things reached such a pitch, that twelve soldiers had to be sent from Tunis to replace those who had deserted from the guard which protected the pavilion on piles. A few hours after their arrival they also deserted, together with one of their officers.

CHAPTER XXIX.

AUGUST 1881.

THE position of affairs at the beginning of August was singularly unfortunate. Fever and dysentery now began to make sad havoc amongst the French troops, almost wholly unaccustomed to the tropical heat of a Tunisian autumn; raids on the homesteads almost in sight of the walls of Tunis increased and multiplied, and the Bey was making feeble efforts to raise a small force to send to Testour "to protect the French railway," and to borrow the money wherewithal to pay the cost of it. On the 2d of August, an unbroken Moslem supremacy of three centuries terminated in the landing of two battalions of French troops at Goletta, and even the presence of the Bey's band failed to attenuate the real state of the case in the minds of the Arabs. Just after the French had passed through the streets, the steamer from the coast arrived, bringing on it 300 of the Tunisian soldiers, who had lately deserted, and who had been

persuaded to return. As soon as they saw what had happened they became very excited, and openly said they would again desert, as they could not be wanted if the Bey called in French troops to "protect" him. From this time French troops began to land in great numbers at Goletta, and on the 6th August, 2000 men encamped at Hammam-el-Lif on the other side of the bay, to remain there till the arrangements for the great Kairwán expedition, which was to calm all parties, including the French electors, were completed. Meanwhile the insurrectionary movement in Northern Tunis grew apace. The insurgent Arabs made a night attack on Medjez-el-Bab, ill-treated the townspeople, carried away their cattle, destroyed a portion of the subsidised French railway, and tore down the telegraph wire and posts. More pressure was now put on the Bey to send his "army" towards Medjez and Testour, but his "protectors" would not come to his aid, and he only succeeded (in spite of the presence of several French financial houses in the country) in scraping together a loan of £37,000, at an annual interest of *fourteen per cent.*

At last 500 soldiers belonging to the irregular Tunisian militia were sent one march forward towards Testour, but over 200 deserted *en route*.

The 300 men who came back to Goletta from Susa likewise disappeared.

About the middle of the month the Arabs around Susa, and between Susa and Kairwán, assumed a menacing attitude, and many of the tribes between Tunis and Algeria prepared to rise. To add to the difficulties of the situation the telegraph wires were again and again cut. Although reinforcements continued to arrive, and General Saussier came on the 13th August to study the campaign, now become inevitable, no movement could be executed to check the depredations of the insurgents. Even the very day after the Commander-in-chief's arrival, and almost in his presence, fifty of the heavily chained convicts, confined in a pestilential dungeon beneath the Goletta fort, contrived to break their fetters, and about dusk rushed into the street. A cry was at once raised that the Bedouins had entered the place; shops and houses were barricaded, and the panic palpably extended to the French officers and soldiers, who, in the cool of the evening, were discussing their absinthe or vermouth before the different cafés. The prisoners, although armed with guns, pistols, and bayonets, hurt no one, and quickly gained the open country. As soon as the alarm subsided, everybody was becomingly valorous after the event, but as the Bey did not wish any

French soldiers to join in the pursuit, only a few Arab irregulars, armed apparently with poles and sticks, made a vain and burlesque attempt to capture the fugitives.

The Austrian Consul-General, Herr Theodorovich, happened to meet the runaways outside Goletta, and fled precipitately to the French camp near Carthage, bringing the alarming news of the "taking of Goletta by the insurgents." The soldiers had already been got under arms, when the true state of the case transpired, but it was thought necessary to provide the representative of Austria with a suitable guard to accompany him back to Goletta. This serio-comic incident indicates sufficiently the extent of the insurrectionary movement, even close to the capital itself.

The deserters from the Tunisian army seem to have nearly all joined the insurgents threatening Susa, and the Governor, General Bacouch, now acknowledged that his authority outside the town walls was gone. On the evening of the 14th August, a Tripolitan Arab appeared in the streets of Susa with a drawn sword, and with the ominous cry of "*jihad! jihad!*" stabbed to death an unoffending old Maltese tradesman in his own shop. The shouts of the murderer had been echoed by others, and there is no doubt but that the acci-

dental arrival of H.M.S. "Monarch" and the calm presence of mind of Captain Tryon, alone saved the European colony from some terrible disaster. Captain Tryon at once prepared to land his marines, but before this could be done, Sy Muhammed Bacouch had succeeded in restoring order. The assassin was sent to Tunis and subsequently hung.

Having arranged the plan of the Kairwán crusade, General Saussier returned to Algeria on the 19th August, leaving Arab anarchy rampant and unchecked, until cooler weather should allow the realisation of his projects. Urgent letters from the Governor of Kairwán, however, now rendered some kind of immediate movement necessary. About 2000 Tunisian irregulars were collected; and on the 20th August these started in the direction of Testour, commanded by Ali Bey and the Generals Ahmed Zerouck and Ali Ben Tourkia. Two French columns of 1500 each started about the same time for Hammamet and Zaghouán. Little progress could be made by the Tunisian force, as all the baggage camels had been stolen in the great *razzia* of the Zlass tribe in July.

The town of Susa was now practically in a state of siege. A Maltese, who went to his garden outside the walls, was at once shot dead, and as the

villagers and tribesmen had agreed to join in an attack on the town, the gates could only be opened at intervals. The Arabs speedily contrived to cut off communication between the Hammamet and Zaghouán columns and Tunis; several convoys of carts were intercepted and robbed, and the drivers escaped with the loss of their property and horses. A Maltese courier was killed close to Zaghouán, and a native guard who accompanied him was also shot. The relatives of the latter were carrying away the body, when some more carts, now escorted by French troops, appeared. Unluckily enough the mourners were mistaken for marauders, and shot by the soldiers before any explanation could be given.

The Hammamet column under Colonel Corréard now sustained a severe check, and was finally obliged to fall back towards Hamman-el-Lif. This was, perhaps, the only success gained by the Arabs in a fair fight during the whole campaign, and they certainly made the most of it. Ali Bey seemed to be unable to quit the vicinity of the capital, and to add to the perplexities occasioned by the equivocal attitude of his "irregulars," he received a letter from Ali Ben Hlifa, saying that he would be attacked by the Arabs as an "infidel and a Frenchman" at the first opportunity.

CHAPTER XXX.

THE COMING CAMPAIGN.

ON the 1st September Colonel Corréard's column was back again at Hamman-el-Lif, to "revictual and complete its munitions before recommencing its march." Not being a French elector, and having already learned something of the significance of official verbiage, I thought it best to go to Hamman-el-Lif and see what had really happened. The very appearance of the soldiers betokened a sharp encounter at close quarters with the Arabs, and I found no difficulty in gleaning the details of the engagement. The French troops had already sighted Hammamet, when they found the surrounding olive groves alive with Arabs. While the latter checked their progress by a sharp fire, other bodies of insurgents collected in their rear, and threatened to cut off all communication with Tunis. In this predicament Colonel Corréard asked the co-operation of a troop of 500 Tunisian irregulars encamped in the neighbourhood, but as the commanding officer declined to comply with the

request in the absence of instructions, it was decided to fall back to "revictual and complete munitions." During the retreat the Arabs made constant attacks on the column, notwithstanding that it was protected by artillery and *mitrailleuses*, and in spite of the heavy loss they necessarily sustained in each assault. The French at length regained their old camp, after a most harassing and perplexing march. In no country does news spread with more mysterious rapidity than amongst the Arabs, and the consequences of Colonel Corréard's retrograde movement were soon felt; the position of the Zaghouán column became critical, and even the Bizerta road was now no longer safe for foot passengers. Troops were then sent to Hammamet by sea, and the French flag was hoisted on the old fort, but matters can hardly be said to have mended; the Arabs devastated the country up to the very walls of the town, and Colonel Corréard did not think it prudent even to attempt to effect a junction with the garrison. Ali Bey's baggage trains now formed the constant object of attack, and he was finally obliged to halt at Medjez-el-Bab, in equal trepidation as to the attitude of the Arabs and the feelings of the troops he commanded. In the midst of this confusion, the Prime Minister announced a second summons to Paris.

On the 9th September, 2000 troops arrived at Goletta from Toulon, and again started to effect on the following day the occupation of Susa, where no resistance was now apprehended, as the imprisoned townspeople were perhaps more afraid of the Arabs of the interior than they were of the French. The number of troops already in the country exceeded 20,000 men, yet it became increasingly difficult to maintain communication with the column, now intrenched in a strong position at Zaghouán. On the 10th September, two mounted Arabs were sent thither from Goletta with despatches. One of them returned the next day, and reported that when about half way they had met a small body of French soldiers pursued by a large number of Arabs. The man stated that he saw several Frenchmen killed, that his companion was shot down, and that he only escaped by the fleetness of his horse. The same day the inhabitants of Jedeida and Tabourba abandoned their houses in consequence of the approach of the Arabs in force.

On the 12th September, Mustapha Ben Ismail was requested or permitted to resign his Grand Viziership, to the satisfaction of everybody except the Bey, who refused to be comforted. The intrigues which preceded this event, and the causes

which directly led to it, are equally a mystery. From the 12th May Mustapha had apparently served France, and, what is more material, M. Roustan and his friends, with his whole heart ; he had made a *profession de foi* to MM. Grévy and Saint-Hilaire face to face, and had been raised to the highest rank in the national order of chivalry ; but notwithstanding all this he fell. Some say the fall was the leaving of a sinking ship in disguise. At any rate, it is certain the ex-Prime Minister had not neglected his opportunities ; trading on the doting liberality of his master, he had, in twenty years, accumulated a princely fortune, after the manner of the heroes in the Arabian Nights. The spoils of disgraced favourites, the lands of the Hassanite family, and even the Tunisian crown jewels,* had found their way into the hands of the captivating but avaricious Mustapha. It was useless for the heirs to the throne to protest, for the splendid estates almost forced on the favourite by his indulgent sovereign were now being exchanged for other property in a fashionable quarter of the French metropolis, and he was preparing to leave an ungrateful country behind him. M. Roustan had gone to Paris for a few days at the end of August, and the order for Mustapha's removal came

* Appendix O.

from thence. Everything beyond this bare fact was religiously kept secret, but by a strange coincidence, his departure was so timed as to enable him to meet the Pro-Bey at Marseilles. On the 21st September there was much weeping in the palace at Goletta. The Bey hung round Mustapha's neck, and seemed to care far more for the loss of his favourite than he did for that of his crown. At parting he gave him an almost peerless black diamond, once in a Spanish monarch's possession, and the great emerald which had adorned the breasts of the Hassanite Beys of Tunis for more than a century. Mustapha went to Paris, and some months later returned thence. As an active participator in Tunisian events he has disappeared from the scene; but in the privacy of the harem he still rules the Bey who still governs the country precisely to the extent the French Resident is pleased to permit. His constant dream is to become once more Tunisian Prime Minister; adventurers sometimes offer to help him by "moving public opinion in his favour through the press," but he refuses to pay ready money or do anything but make promises. With all his faults Mustapha did his utmost to keep the French out of Tunis; and to counteract the policy of M. Roustan. His hate for France is doubtless as deep now as it was then, and

if any turn in the wheel of fortune weakened her influence or crippled her resources, the Republic would certainly not have a bitterer or more relentless enemy than Mustapha Ben Ismail, ex-Prime Minister of Tunis, and Grand Cordon of the Legion of Honour.

Mustapha was succeeded by his immediate predecessor, the octogenarian Muhamed Khaznadar, who in spite of his eighty years and a club foot, is almost as vigorous as when Sir Thomas Reade pulled his ear for "neglecting English interests" nearly fifty years ago. Muhamed, in accepting office, openly said that he knew the Tunisian Vizier was now a cypher, and that he should merely try to be an intelligent machine.

The state of affairs showed no signs of mending; communications with General Sabatier's column grew more and more difficult, two entire convoys were plundered, an Italian camp-follower, a boy Odino, was roasted alive, and finally, in spite of the presence of the troops at Zaghouán, the aqueduct conveying water to Tunis was cut, and the metropolis threatened with one of the most appalling of privations. It was only four days later (September 16th), that workmen succeeded in repairing the damage, under the protection of a powerful escort.

The day after Mustapha, accompanied always by

Mañcaro and Volterra, left for Paris, carrying with him the proceeds of most of his real estate, the first symptom of disturbances on the French railway was apparent. After devastating Tabourba and Jedeida, to the rear of Ali Bey's column near Medjez, the Arabs forced the train to return, firing at the carriages and killing one of the Italian guards. The details of these raids and outrages now become monotonous; but, although troops continued to arrive almost daily, the moment for action was not yet come, and the Arabs under General "Summer" held almost undisputed sway in Tunis.

Towards the end of the month the weather became perceptibly cooler, and on the 24th September General Saussier, the Commander-in-Chief, once more reached Tunis. In spite of the warning conveyed by the fate of the ex-President of the Municipality, the ulema of the Regency had not been entirely indifferent to the fate of their country and the threatened desertion of Kairwán, the virgin shrine of North Africa. Important communications had been addressed to the Egyptian vernacular press, and the powerful confraternity of Sidi Abd-el-Kader el Chilani at Baghdad was, at the instance of its dependent *Zaouia* at Kairwán, using its exertion and great influence to prevent

the destruction of the sacred city. Its chief, I believe, addressed a remonstrance to the Sultan as Caliph, praying him to intercede with France on the subject, or, if necessary, to ask the mediation of the friendly Powers. The ulema of Tunis received ample proof that the matter excited great interest throughout the Moslem world. They openly said at the time that Colonel Negrier's desecration of Sidi Sheikh's tomb had already enabled Bou Amema to arrange his differences with the rival chiefs, and that the destruction of Kairwán would infallibly tend to consolidate the Moslem antipathy to Christian rule in North Africa, and produce a general revolt.

The French had now over 30,000 troops in Tunis; and on the 24th September I accompanied the late Commander Selby, R.N., of H.M.S. "Falcon," to see General Logerot's camp at Manouba. I find the following note in my journal:—"Yesterday I visited General Logerot's camp at Manouba. The soldiers recently arrived are superior in appearance and physique to those who took part in the first expedition. A large barrack is filled with stores, artillery, and heavy ambulance waggons. As soon as the rains set in, the country between Tunis and Kairwán will become a marsh, and there are no roads. The large amount of baggage each soldier

is to carry, in addition to his portion of a tent, will prove as serious an obstacle to progress as it did in the Khamír country, and will place them at a disadvantage in the guerilla warfare the Arabs resort to.

“Close to the camp are the graves of seventy-four soldiers who have died since the middle of July, and who all appear to have been under twenty-four years of age.”

Ali Bey's position at Testour, a few hours' march from Medjez, now became a very difficult one. Ali Ben Amar, an old, one-armed Caid of the Ouled Ayar tribe, took the command of a large body of insurgents, and actually formed a regular camp at Ain Tonga, and sent a sort of ultimatum to the heir-apparent. General Ahmed Zerouck had recourse to a ruse which he had practised with much success in 1864; he invited some of Ben Amar's followers to a meeting, and then tried to detain them as hostages. They had, however, arranged a preconcerted signal with their followers, and were promptly rescued. This led to an engagement between the Tunisian troops and the Arabs, which was represented on both sides as a victory, and gave rise to the most fantastic exaggerations. In reality, Ali Bey only defended his position, and succeeded in keeping the Arabs at bay, and nothing

more. He sent expresses to Tunis to ask for reinforcements and a further supply of ammunition, but before any assistance could be sent him he was still harder pressed in a second engagement on the following day. After the fighting had ceased, a portion of Ali Ben Amar's forces was observed to move in a northerly direction, but Ali Bey was wholly powerless to control their movements. The consequences of this inability were of so unexpected and important a nature, that I reserve the continuation of the narrative for a separate chapter. On the 30th September, M. Roustan, accompanied by Generals Bréart and St. John, returned to Tunis, but the day will be always remembered as the date of the Oued Zerga massacre.

CHAPTER XXXI.

THE MASSACRE OF THE GREY RIVER
(OUED ZERGA).

WHILE M. Roustan was conducting General St. John to the audience-chamber at Goletta, to receive, within twenty-four hours of his arrival in the country, the highest honours of the Nichán Iftikhar, very alarming news reached Tunis.

It appeared that on the previous day the Arabs who had attacked Ali Bey afterwards surrounded Oued Zerga, the sixth station on the French railway, some seventy miles from Tunis. Having torn up the railway line on either side of the station, and thrown the rails into the river, they attacked the station buildings, setting them on fire. The station-master, M. Raimbert, was burnt alive, and ten other *employés*, nearly all Maltese and Italians, were massacred. Having accomplished this terrible act of vengeance, the Arabs retired. All traffic between Tunis and Ghardimaou was immediately stopped. The Minister Resident invited the English

and Italian Consuls to assist at the official inquiry. Accordingly the English and Italian consular clerks, medical officers, and dragomans, proceeded to Oued Zerga by a special train, which conveyed the French authorities and a supply of coffins to the scene of the calamity. Six hundred French troops had already proceeded to the spot, but long before their arrival the Arabs had disappeared. The increased native ferment was undoubtedly caused to a great extent by the wholesale destruction of the olive forests, villages, and vineyards which General Sabatier considered necessary around Zaghouán, but this latest outrage was unexpected, and naturally caused intense excitement in Tunis itself.

The train which proceeded to the scene of the disaster did not return the same evening as was expected, thereby increasing the wide-spread anxiety of the European colonists. All that did come from Medjez was a small bag containing the supposed remains of M. Raimbert. They only consisted of some charred bones and a portion of burnt flesh, but they were, I believe, identified by the buttons of his uniform. Early the following morning they were interred in the Roman Catholic burial-ground of Saint Antonio. In the afternoon the English and Italian officials reached Tunis after

a narrow escape of a rencontre with the Arabs ; and the prevalence of various alarming rumours, added to the impossibility of placing any longer much reliance on the official reports industriously circulated by the Tunisian Government, induced me to visit Medjez-el-Bab. Medjez is a small town some fifty-five miles east of Tunis, and is situated exactly seventeen miles due west of Oued Zerga and fifteen miles to the north-west of Ali Bey's camp at Testour. Medjez-el-Bab is the fifth station from Tunis on the French railway, and forms the eastern extremity of the vast and fertile valley of the Medjerdah, which stretches inland from the Mediterranean, and is traversed about twenty miles from the coast by the ruins of the great Roman aqueduct which once united Carthage and Zaghouán. At Medjez-el-Bab (Medjez-of-the-Gate) commences a series of wild mountain gorges and picturesque ravines, through which the Medjerdah river finds its way from the comparatively narrow Beja valley into the broader Tunis plain ; while a spur of the same rocky hills separates Medjez from the half-ruined city of Testour. It was this district which now unexpectedly bade fair to become the first battlefield of the Tunisian campaign.

The extraordinary events of the past week, the practical defeat of Sy Ali Bey, followed by the

daring raids of the insurgent Arabs on the French railway in the defiles of Oued Zerga, for a moment diverted public attention even from the coming march on Kairwán, and certainly taxed General Logerot's military skill to the utmost. A month ago the plan for the expedition was simple enough. Ali Bey was to guard the French railway, and maintain order in the apparently pacified northern provinces of Tunis, while the French columns stamped out *manu militari* the spirit of rebellion in the south. It now turned out that Ali Bey was powerless to effect anything ; that the tribes of the north were gathering in thousands to create a diversion in aid of their brethren of the south ; and that notwithstanding the immediate presence of Ali Bey's troops, and the knowledge that there were 40,000 French troops in the Regency, the insurgents had managed to obtain possession of the most important strategic point on the French railway. There were hardly any passengers by the afternoon train on Sunday, October 2d, and at Manouba we received a guard of thirty soldiers, commanded by a lieutenant of the 73d Regiment. On passing Jedeida and Testour, the two villages which were pillaged by the insurgents during the previous week, I noticed a small camp of Tunisian soldiers near the railway. After three hours'

travelling the train reached Medjez-el-Bab. The station formed the headquarters of Colonel De Bord, and a battalion of the 8th Regiment was encamped on one side of it, and one of the 73d on the other. Water had apparently run short, and the train brought a large supply from Tunis, with which the railway reservoir was speedily filled. The soldiers were nearly all young, but of good physique, and looked little the worse for the hard fighting many of them had seen during the previous night, the details of which I had no difficulty in ascertaining.

As soon as news of the Oued Zerga massacre reached Manouba, General Logerot despatched a battalion of the 8th Regiment and two companies of the 73d Regiment to Medjez and Oued Zerga. The line was repaired under the protection of the men of the 73d Regiment, and, having effected a junction, the troops proceeded by train to Beja. Later in the afternoon a company of the 73d Regiment, escorting a number of invalid soldiers, set out for Medjez. On quitting the first tunnel from Beja they found the summit of the defile covered by Arabs, who commenced firing into the train. The rails were now covered with stones, and the woodwork of all the bridges was in flames. The French soldiers steadily returned the Arab fire

till they arrived at kilomètre 95, when the train left the rails amid the shouts of the insurgents, who began rushing towards it. Colonel De Bord then ordered Commandant Guelfucci to attack the heights, and the Arabs were successfully dislodged from their position with some loss. With extraordinary courage, however, they charged to within 100 mètres of the French guns. One French soldier was mortally wounded, and two others injured. The Arabs ceased firing at dusk. An insurgent, who endeavoured to kill the engine-driver, was shot on the line itself. The young French troops, who were under fire for the first time, behaved well against terrible odds. A company of the 8th Regiment, who guarded a train sent in search of the missing soldiers, then arrived, and all the troops now retired to Medjez, being compelled to do so owing to their insufficient number, the presence of the invalids, and the want of provisions. They consequently abandoned Oued Zerga and the wrecked train, containing the bodies of the victims of last Friday's massacre, and brought back the English and Italian Consular officers to Medjez.

The retreat to Medjez was undoubtedly a prudent measure, and it was probably owing to the Arabs' ignorance of the exact number of the French troops

that Colonel De Bord's little band escaped annihilation. The officers seemed anxious that what had happened should be understood in Europe, and gave the most detailed account of the incidents which occurred on their journey from Beja. The order in the two camps was excellent. The goods-shed was guarded by about twoscore of Tunisian soldiers, who were in charge of the powder and stores which Ali Bey officially certified to have arrived at Testour some days before ; but as many of them were smoking under the powder-waggons, the ultimate safety of the Tunisian magazine seemed very problematical. The weapons of the Bey's contingent afforded great amusement to the French soldiers. I noticed one ragged little Arab wearing a large cavalry sabre marked G. R. 1792 ; and hardly two men were armed alike. The misfortunes of poor Ali Bey, on the other side of the blue hills to the east, were no secret at Medjez, and a very general feeling of generous indignation seemed to prevail that French troops were not at once sent to his aid. Diplomacy at Tunis and Paris was very heartily anathematised by the honest soldiers at Medjez. "We believe," they said, "Ali Bey has done his best to fight for France, and how can France leave him to a certain destruction?" For two days previous to my arrival no communication

had been received from him, although the frequent reports of his guns testified to a renewed attack, but to-day Colonel Allegro had arrived from Tunis with five Algerian horsemen, and early in the morning had left Medjez at full gallop in the direction of the Tunisian camp. During the afternoon I heard an interesting account of the Oued Zerga massacre from an eye-witness, Luigi Bisi, a foreman of platelayers, who himself had a very narrow escape. He was at work on Friday morning, September 30th, at kilomètre 98, and suddenly saw the cliffs near the line covered with Arab horsemen, one of whom was carrying a green standard. He first thought they were Ali Bey's troops, but they descended to the railway, crossed the Medjerdah river, and attacked the workmen at kilomètre 97. Hearing several shots, he and his companions fled to Beja, being hotly pursued for four miles. Later on he proceeded, with a train guarded by soldiers, towards Oued Zerga. At kilomètre 99 he found the watchman's house pillaged and destroyed; also the bodies of two Maltese brothers, named Farrugia, and of an Italian, burnt and horribly mutilated; in a cellar they found a wounded Italian, who has since died in the Tunis Hospital. At bridge No. 10 they discovered the foreman, Fiorali, an Italian, burnt to death. Sixty mètres

beyond, three Maltese were found burnt and indescribably disfigured at kilomètre 95. The bridge No. 14 was on fire, and two other corpses were on the line. The rails here were destroyed. Having repaired the line the train approached Oued Zerga. He saw the station and several carriages burning. Suddenly the train left the rails. They went forward on foot, preceded by soldiers. Close to the station Bisi saw two bodies burning on a pile of tarred sleepers, over which several cans of oil and grease had been apparently emptied. Leaving Oued Zerga, they walked to Medjez, arriving early on Saturday morning. Of eleven victims whose bodies were recovered by Bisi six are Maltese, three are Italian, and two are French.

The official report presented to the British Consul-General contains some additional details. Mr. Carbonaro writes :—

“While I was waiting on Saturday for the special train which was to convey us to Medjez, the ordinary afternoon mail arrived. I saw the guard deliver to the station-master a bag containing about ten pounds weight of charred flesh, which he said formed the remains of the late M. Emile Raimbert. We did not reach Oued Zerga till dusk. The station and one of the carriages were still burning. Among the ashes of a large pile of sleepers, which had burnt fiercely, some carbonised bones were collected, but it was impossible to say if they belonged to the body of M. Raimbert or an Arab servant who had shared his fate. I observed that some

tins of petroleum and grease had been used to facilitate the destruction of the buildings, and that the water-reservoir had been destroyed, apparently with a view of preventing any subsequent attempt to extinguish the fire. The only living being we found at Oued Zerga was a young negro, who had been employed at the station. He told me that while the Arabs were killing M. Raimbert, he succeeded in concealing himself in the cellar, but that another Mussulman, who had only been in the railway company's service about fifteen days, discovered his hiding-place and shouted to the Arabs, 'Here is another dog,' whereupon he was seized and bound hand and foot. After a delay it was decided that the negro should remain a prisoner, and he was carried to a mountain near Beja, beyond Ain Tonga, where a large meeting of Arabs took place, and a discussion ensued as to whether they should join in an attack on Ali Bey or continue the destruction of the line. During the night he managed to escape, and returned to Oued Zerga, which he found deserted and in flames. He said that besides those known to have been killed, he saw several Maltese and Italians running before the Arabs, but of whom nothing had been heard since. After a long delay, we reached the waggon containing the bodies of the victims about midnight. The confusion that prevailed is beyond description; the French had been attacked during the evening, the Beja train had also gone off the rails, a fresh assault by the Arabs was momentarily expected, it was raining in torrents, and it was quite impossible to get the carriage containing the bodies across the broken lines. Within the waggon I distinctly saw eight bodies, three of them only superficially burnt, and still capable of being identified. They all bore marks of sword and gun-shot wounds. The following Maltese were recognised:—Giuseppe Farugia, of Cassah Zurrico; his brother, Vincenzo; one Pubblio, the son of Francesco; and Leonardo Scicluna."

Shortly after five P.M. we observed Colonel Allegro and his companions riding swiftly towards Medjez from the hills, and he presently reached the station. He had succeeded in eluding the vigilance of the insurgents and had seen Ali Bey. I had a long conversation with Colonel Allegro, who was dressed as an Arab chief, and his description of his adventurous ride was very interesting. Colonel Allegro has a strong opinion on two points—first, that Tunis must be at once occupied; and, secondly, that Ali Bey must be of necessity relieved by French troops. His opinion should certainly have some weight with the authorities, but as the campaign seems to be partly directed by General Farre, partly by M. Saint-Hilaire, partly by M. Roustan, and partly by General Logerot, and, as none of them can agree on any one course of action, it is impossible to tell what will happen. One thing only is certain, and that is that Ali Ben Amar, the one-armed chief of the Ouled Ben Ayar, has by his attack on Ali Bey and his well-planned diversion on the French railway, caused the usually accepted plan for the winter campaign to tumble to pieces like a house of playing-cards, and postponed for a short time the fate of holy Kairwán. Ali Bey undertook to protect the line of railway from Ghardimaou to Tunis, while General Logerot advanced

on Kairwán from Manouba, General Sabatier from Zaghouán, General Philibert from the Enfida, General Étienne from Susa, and General Saussier in person from Tebessa, but it now turns out that unless Ali Bey is himself protected, both he and his army are in danger of speedy destruction, and that unless Ali Ben Amar's forces are defeated, three-fourths of the French railway will be hopelessly ruined. The Bone-Guelma Company ridicule as an absurdity the protection of Ali Bey and his mutinous followers, and declare that General Logerot's plans will bring about the loss of their valuable line. The General is unwilling to change his original design, and everything has come to a temporary deadlock. Troops are hurrying in hot haste to Medjez; the railway authorities threaten to abandon their line unless General Logerot will efficiently protect it, and Ali Ben Amar is endeavouring to capture Ali Bey's artillery. Before anything can be decided on, Ali Ben Amar and his army will have disappeared, but the necessity for a military demonstration in the north before one is attempted in the south will remain. Although the army of occupation will soon reach 50,000 men, the officers themselves believe that nothing can be done before the opening of the Chambers three weeks hence. The truth is, that nobody is

sure of his position, and nobody is willing to incur present responsibility and possible blame. Meanwhile, the Arabs secretly rejoice in the visible discomfiture of the French councils, and regard Ali Ben Amar as a hero worthy of their old traditions. The non-occupation of Tunis is pointed out as a glaring sign of weakness, the unfortunate consequences of which may at any moment become a still more unfortunate reality.

In the evening I left Medjez and returned to Tunis.

CHAPTER XXXII.

THE FRENCH OCCUPATION OF THE CITY OF TUNIS.

THE immediate consequence of the Oued Zerga disaster was a very natural agitation for the occupation of the metropolis by a French garrison. Sympathising as I did with the wrongs of the Tunisians, I saw unmistakable signs that an anti-Christian outbreak might at any moment occur. The general hostility which the Protectorate had given rise to all over the country was intensified by General Sabatier's vigorous but destructive *reconnaissances* around Zaghouán, and might be reasonably expected to reach a culminating point at the fall and possible pollution of Kairwán. The discomfiture of Ali Bey and the atrocities of Oued Zerga were now notoriously the subject of ill-disguised public rejoicings amongst the Arabs, both at Tunis and the neighbouring "holy city" of Sidi Bou Said, and the averted faces and gloomy looks of the strangers, who now thronged the streets, told their own tale of hatred and dislike. M.

Roustan alone deprecated the occupation, as it always afforded him a useful diplomatic lever, to influence the mind of the Bey, who still seemed anxious, when all else was lost, to preserve at any cost uncontrolled possession of his capital. At this critical juncture, the brutal murder of an inoffending Maltese coachman within sight of the city walls decided the fate of Tunis, and with many fears the Bey wrote a letter to the Ferik or Governor, informing him "that his allies *had consented* to stay for a time in the forts and citadel, and were to be received and treated like brothers, and that if by chance they found it necessary to pitch any camps, they were in no way to be hindered." Meanwhile the manager of the railway to the frontier issued notices suspending all traffic beyond Medjez-el-Bab. Still the French authorities seemed to hesitate; the Belvidere hill overlooking the city was occupied by a small camp and fortified with a battery of artillery, and regiments from Manouba on two or three occasions passed close to the town gates.

French troops now went to the rescue of Ali Bey, but the Arabs showed no signs of surrender. On the 5th October they were with difficulty beaten off in an attack on the Tunisian guns, and the French intimated to Ali Bey that a more vigorous action was necessary. An assault on the insurgents'

camp was consequently concerted for the following morning (October 6th). The headquarters of the heir-apparent were at this time situated half a mile south of Testour, the French occupying a position to their left, and the Arabs a very favourable one on a hill two miles distant. The insurgents numbered about 5000 men, and were nearly all mounted. Ali Bey marched at dawn, followed by the French troops, whose presence in the rear rendered any further resistance to the Bey's orders impossible, for it now transpired that previous to the arrival of the French reinforcements his soldiers refused to attack their fellow-countrymen. The struggle lasted four hours. The insurgents, finding themselves hard pressed, suddenly set fire to their camp, and retreated from the neighbourhood. The French fired six projectiles on the fugitives at the end of the engagement, but otherwise took no active part in the fighting. Only three rebels were taken prisoners, and the loss on either side was not great. One French soldier was mortally wounded.

This engagement put an end to the dilemma in which Ali Bey had been placed for several weeks, and he was now directed to move his camp, in the direction of Zaghouán. The news of the occupation of Tunis once more aroused the latent hostility of his followers, and he was again

threatened with a mutiny. It was in vain that General Ben Turkiya cleft the head of an imprudent soldier, who boldly anathematised the treason of Muhamed es Sadek; the troops would no longer offer the heir-apparent the usual honours. Most of the irregulars were at once disbanded, and a month later just enough men remained to furnish the necessary guards and do police duty in Tunis itself. The collapse of the Tunisian army was now complete, and it could scarcely have been more ignominious. Its present existence is entirely confined to the delusive statistics of the Tunisian almanac, and to the legion of generals and colonels, headed by General-of-Division Elias Musalli, whose exalted military rank General Japy obstinately refused to recognise.

On the 9th October workmen were busy in clearing out the heaps of rubbish which filled the habitable portion of the citadel, and masons were engaged in opening an unusual doorway in the bastion. It was clear, therefore, that the occupation would not be long delayed. The time has now come when I should describe the capital of the Regency, so soon to lose the charms of an Oriental metropolis.

The city of Tunis covers the eastern slope of a rocky hill which divides the less turbid lake El

Bahira (or "the little sea") from the more turbid lake Sebka-es-Sedjoui (or "the shallows of salt"). A narrow canal at Goletta, seven miles as the crow flies to the east of Tunis, separates "the little sea" from the Mediterranean. The configuration of Tunis is strictly after the manner of most Moslem cities; the Kasbah, or citadel, occupies the crest of a hill, and a labyrinth of tortuous streets finds its way thence to the plain at its foot. The whole is, or rather was, surrounded by a wall, which traversed in its circuit a distance of seven miles. Twenty years ago the town wall was perfect, but about half a mile of the bastion has since gradually and almost imperceptibly disappeared in the Frankish quarter, and now forms the site of a street called appropriately La Rue des Remparts. The great eastern gate of Tunis (the Bab-el-Bhar) has therefore no longer any practical utility, having lost the support of the wall on either side of it; but outside the European *faubourg* the mediæval defences of Tunis are still in a tolerable state of preservation. From one of the neighbouring hills an excellent bird's-eye view of Tunis can be obtained. In the sun its essential feature is a dazzling and unrelieved whiteness, but its inhabitants perversely enough still call it El Hâthra, or "the green." Tunis

possesses seven chief gates, besides several posterns. Each of these gates is protected by a fort having its cannon sometimes *en barbette*, but oftener mounted in embrasures. The walls of the lower town have no defence but these batteries, but towards the north and west the ramparts are bisected at intervals by towers. The principal gates of Tunis are the Bab-el-Bhar, on the lake side; the Bab-el-Háthra, the Bab Abdu Selam, and the Bab-es-Sadum towards the Bardo Palace and the Manouba; the Bab Sidi Abdallah, under the shadow of the citadel; the Bab Sidi Alewa, on the road to Zaghouán and Kairwán; and the Bab-es-Zira, on that leading to Susa and the coast. The whole of these gates (with the single exception of the Bab-el-Bhar) are closed at sunset, and as the keys are commonly supposed to remain till dawn under the pillow of the Ferik, or Arab Governor, the benighted traveller has no other resource than to avail himself of the scanty accommodation afforded by the guard-houses outside the walls.

In addition to the *enceinte*, the somewhat abrupt descent on the north-western side of Tunis is defended by three large forts built three centuries ago by the soldiers of Charles V. and his son, and called respectively Borj Manoubia, Borj Filfa, and

Borj-el-Rebta. A lofty aqueduct constructed at the same time supplied them as well as the adjacent citadel with water from a distant spring, but it has now fallen into ruins, and is popularly described as of Roman origin. The Borj-el-Rebta is a splendid specimen of the science of fortification as understood by our forefathers. It is surrounded by a deep fosse, and bristles with useless cast-iron guns which serve to deceive the Tunisians since the Bey paid one of his loans ten years ago by the sale of all the brass and bronze cannon in the Regency.

The city of Tunis is commanded by two hills in its immediate vicinity—viz., Sidi Bil Hassan, properly called Borj Sidi Ali Rais, to the south, and the Belvedere to the north. The fortress which crowns the former belongs to a period far anterior to that in which the Borj-el-Rebta was built, but its position is unrivalled. It dominates all the roads to Southern Tunis, and its elevation is some hundreds of feet above that of the Kasbah, or town citadel. Beyond it are two imposing looking sanctuaries, one of which is every Friday crowded with Tunisian ladies, who profess to find a cure for sterility in sliding down a rock on the slope of the hill upon which the *Zaouia* in question is built. Belvedere was never fortified till the French

appeared before Tunis in the early days of October 1881. The guns of Sidi Bil Hassan and the Borjel-Rebta were sufficient to prevent its heights being occupied by the troops of the Dey of Algiers or the supporters of some rival to the beylical throne, the only enemies which Tunis has seen from its walls since the Spaniards evacuated it in 1574, and the friendly expanse of the "little sea" efficiently protected it from the artillery of Blake and the bombardments of half the fleets of Europe, which have repeatedly razed Goletta to the ground. The Belvedere hill was, however, the very first point occupied by the French troops, and was made the site of a strongly-intrenched camp, and fortified by earthworks.

The Arabs occupy the upper portion of the town, the Jews a wholly distinct quarter below the Moorish city, and the Europeans the plain between the hill and the lake. Although the streets are tortuous beyond description, they all converge either on the citadel or the European Piazza. To lose your way in Tunis is difficult. If you ascend you ultimately arrive in the square before the Kasbah; if you descend you must eventually come to the Piazza, flanked on one side by the British Consulate and on the other by the old Bab-el-Bhar, or city gate. Under the auspices of the late British

representative, Sir Richard Wood, C.B., G.C.M.G., an extensive Maltese *faubourg* (Malta Sghira, or Little Malta) sprang up on the north side of the European quarter, and during the *régime* of M. Roustan, a French colony soon bid fair to fill up the entire space between the Bab-el-Bhar and the "little sea" with a miniature Algiers.

At dawn on the 10th October I traversed the narrow streets of the Arab town, and emerging from the Sidi Abdallah gate, stood on the crest of the hill overlooking the Bardo and Manouba plain. Barely a dozen yards from the entrance to the upper city, a gloomy looking portal, covered with rusty sheet iron, had been opened for the first time this century. This doorway, pierced in the rough sandstone of the old Spanish *enceinte*, led through some gloomy vaults into the very centre of the venerable citadel. Close by a Tunisian guard was drawn up, and a little in advance of the door and nearer the brow of a hill, were the Governor and Vice-Governor of the town, sitting on their horses, and patiently waiting to do Sidna's behests, and "welcome the conquerors as brothers." Their aides-de-camp carried huge umbrellas instead of arms, but abject shame was written on the face of every individual composing that little group. Since the days when Carthaginian captives graced

a Roman triumph, I doubt if history has known many greater humiliations, than that of these unfortunate Tunisian officers, compelled by political expediency to conduct their enemies with smiles and blandishments into the heart of the capital of their country.

I asked the Vice-Governor, Sy Hasan Emdelgi (one of the most magnificent men I ever saw, and at least 6 feet 5 inches in height), the name of the lately opened postern. He smiled, as only Moors can smile, and said significantly, "Bab-el-Ghadar," which is, being interpreted, "the traitor's door." A few minutes later I saw the French troops winding up the hill towards the town. At eight o'clock precisely two battalions of infantry and a battery of artillery reached the Kasbah, and quietly entered it by the "Bab-el-Ghadar." From the hill I could distinctly see the cavalry under General Maurand making for the "Bab-el-Háthra" or Gate of Verdure. In the course of the morning a French camp was pitched on the parade opposite the French Residency, and the forts Rebta and Ali Rais were occupied by the troops. These movements had hardly begun when M. Roustan issued a circular to the Consular body, signed by him as French Minister Resident and delegate of the Bey, informing the foreign representatives of the occu-

pation of Tunis as a military and defensive measure. The acting Italian Consul-General refused even to acknowledge its receipt. At ten o'clock Signor Pestalozza, chief interpreter of the Italian Consulate, proceeded to Goletta to present to the Bey a lengthy protest drawn up by Signor Raybaudi Massiglia, acting Italian Consul-General and political agent, in the name of the Italian Government against the military occupation of Tunis as a violation of the Italian Convention of 1868, and holding the Bey responsible for the consequences.

It afterwards transpired that a regular convention had been agreed upon for the occupation of the town between the Bey and the Minister Resident, by which it was stipulated that the French should reach the citadel by an unused gate, that no triumphal demonstration should be made during the entry, that the mosques and sanctuaries should be respected, that native police officers should accompany any troops patrolling the Arab quarters, and that the French and Tunisian flags should be hoisted together at certain points on Fridays and Sundays. Later in the day I obtained an order to visit the Kasbah, or citadel, which has rarely, if ever, been seen by a European since the Spaniards evacuated it in 1574. The *enceinte* is about a mile in extent, and, excepting a stucco façade looking

towards the city, every building above ground within it is hopelessly ruined, but even the remains of the Spanish works of the sixteenth century are still magnificent. Its whole area is traversed by enormous vaults, which are yet tolerably perfect. Heaps of stone projectiles are to be seen in all directions; not a single gun on the ramparts is any longer serviceable; and in the centre of the ruins is an Arab tomb of exquisite beauty.

A week or so afterwards I had an opportunity of seeing the Dar-el-Bey, or Town Palace, which is undoubtedly one of the most remarkable buildings in the city, and occupies one side of the square facing the citadel, which, strangely enough, received the name of Souk-el-Islam three years ago, when Kheir-ed-Din Pacha was pleased to adorn it with two rows of shops, built in a bastard kind of Hispano-Moorish style, which were to be only tenanted by true believers. The exclusion of the Jews ensured the speedy failure of the Souk-el-Islam as a commercial speculation, and the shops and arcades became tenantless within a year of the brilliant *fête* which celebrated its inauguration; but its projector had become meanwhile Grand Vizier of the Ottoman Empire. The Dar-el-Bey contains a few rooms which the Alhambra might envy (especially an octagon chamber, surmounted

by a cupola lined with lace-like carving in cement), but all that is modern is in the worst possible taste of Southern Italy. The old suite of apartments was occupied by Caroline of Brunswick, who, as I have before mentioned, happened to be visiting Tunis when Lord Exmouth threatened to bombard Goletta a few days after his attack on Algiers. Three years ago the comparatively new and hideous portion of the palace was redecorated and refurnished for the accommodation of the brother of the Emperor of Germany and his daughter, who were entertained by the Bey for several days. In the Dar-el-Bey Muhamed es Sadek received the Grand Cross of the Bath at the hands of Admiral Yelverton, and there he has welcomed in succession three of our own royal princes within the last quarter of a century. All this is over now. One of the bitterest pangs the Bey has suffered since he became a French vassal last May, was occasioned him a fortnight ago, when M. Roustan demanded the surrender of the Dar-el-Bey, as a residence for General Lambert and a site for the new Tunisian *Bureaux Arabes*. The old man wept, and pleaded in vain his religious obligation to pass, there the twenty-seventh day of each Ramadan fast. Of course he yielded at last, but he refused to be comforted, even when the Resident cynically re-

marked that the French would take good care of him at Tunis, and consider him their guest during the next Ramadan. When I last visited the Dar-el-Bey, workmen were busy in cleaning and painting the rooms which had been occupied by the Prussian Red Prince, and which were being furnished up for General Lambert, Commander of the Republican Guard of Paris, whose nomination as Military Governor of Tunis was daily expected. A group of old Turkish guards were looking on dolefully enough at the proceedings of the French soldiers, and on the façade of the palace at least a dozen of General Saussier's manifestoes were rudely pasted up. The general's proclamation, in Arabic, ran thus :—

Notice from the General commanding the French Forces.

As Commander-in-Chief of the French Army in Tunis, it becomes my duty to inform the tribes of this country that the French Government, as an ally of his Highness the Bey of Tunis has sent me here to restore tranquillity. Those who till now are in peace have nothing to fear. The French soldiers will interfere with nobody ; but at the same time, a signal punishment will await those who rebel against the authority of the Bey, or endeavour to induce others to revolt against him.

Given at the French Camp at Goletta, on this the 16th day of October 1881.

(Signed)

The Commander-in-Chief, SAUSSIER.

The great door of the Kasbah looking into the

Souk-el-Islam was still closed, not to be opened until General Lambert came into residence at the Dar-el-Bey. The untenanted shops might also have been utilised for the French garrison, as the tents among the scorpions and other reptiles which frequent the ruins of Spanish magnificence inside the citadel, are hardly habitable during the autumn rains.

The transformation of the once Moslem city *par excellence* of Barbary into a French garrison town is going on slowly but surely. Its inhabitants are now awakened by French bugle-calls; gendarmes are stationed at all the principal points, both within and without the walls; one police post after another is quietly vacated by its ragged Tunisian occupants and unobtrusively occupied by French soldiers; the General Commandant des Troupes Françaises dans la Circonscription de Tunis has rented a large house adjoining the Residency for a year, and the Archbishop of Algeria and Tunis has taken a five years' lease of an eligible palace, and is building a Cathedral. The *cafés* and hotels are full of French officers, both civil and military, and grandly dressed Algerian *goums* drink their absinthe at the innumerable *buvettes* which have sprung up in all directions as if by magic, and clank their swords on the pave-

ment as if the annexation of the Regency to Algeria was already a *fait accompli*. The Jews rejoice in the occupation as a source of security and profit, the Italians detest it as a death-blow to all their hopes, the French and Maltese regard it with a feeling very much akin to relief, and the Arabs speak of it with bated breath ; and although their belief in *kismet* is strong, they still hope against hope that somehow or other the Sultan and Caliph will one day have his own again.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

AT SUSA IN THE SAHEL.

THE news of what at first seemed very like a French defeat under the walls of Susa, and a desire to witness the preparations for the coming Kairwán campaign, induced me to undertake a twelve hours' journey thither by sea, a few days after the French tricolour floated over the Tunisian standard on the Tunis citadel. The white-walled town, which covers the side of a hill sloping gently towards the shores of the Mediterranean, can boast of an historical past of some importance. As the Roman Adrumetum, it was the capital of a rich and extensive province, and a great Roman road stretched from its walls across the site of Moslem Kairwán to Tebessa, in Algeria. During the past three centuries Susa certainly bore the brunt of the aggressive piracy of its Turkish masters, and was ten times bombarded by the French, Venetian, and Spanish fleets. But somehow or other it always managed to rise again from its ashes, and is still

the capital, not only of the small district immediately surrounding it, but of the whole of that fruitful and cultivated zone of land which borders on the sea for nearly 200 miles between Cape Bon and Sfax, and which is usually described as the Sahel. Five weeks before the native governor had surrendered the keys of Susa to Colonel Moulin, and the town, which had so often defied the fleets of France, and Spain, and Venice, passed without a blow into the possession of the French troops. Since then the garrison has been very materially strengthened, and the time has been spent in active preparation for the coming campaign, and in very frequent reconnaissances with the warlike Arabs of the interior, who seem determined to dispute the passage of the French across the hills covered with olive groves, which for a distance of ten or twelve miles separate the coast from the sandy plain, in the middle of which stands holy Kairwán.

Susa possesses a population of about 10,000 souls within its walls, and a sufficiency of mosques, religious colleges, and schools. The fortifications are certainly in better repair than those of any other town in the Regency, but ten years ago the present Bey sold all the brass and bronze cannons they contained to be broken up as old metal in Marseilles and London. The guns still there are useless.

Besides the *enceinte*, Susa is defended by a fort on the sea-shore, called the Kasr-el-Bahr, and the whole city is dominated by the Kasbah, the view from which, looking seawards, is of almost Neapolitan beauty. As we have seen in a previous chapter, Susa underwent a siege as late as 1864.

On my arrival General Étienne gave orders that I was to be permitted to visit the fortifications and the French camps, and Colonel Moulin was courteous enough to allow his aide-de-camp, Lieutenant Walewski (the son of the French Ambassador at St. James's during the Empire), to act as my guide. Here, as at Medjez, the military authorities seemed to invite criticism, and the arrangements at Susa reflected much credit on the energy and zeal of Colonel Moulin, who made all the preparations necessary for the reception of the expeditionary column during the three weeks which intervened between the occupation of the town and the arrival of General Étienne. The stores already landed were calculated to be sufficient for 10,000 men during three months. Shortly after the occupation a building in the lower part of the town was used for an hospital, and acquired a very unfortunate reputation, but before I arrived there the great rooms of the citadel were made available for the sick soldiers. All was bustle and confusion now ;

the little wharf was filled up with merchandise of every description, transports and steamers of the *Compagnie Transatlantique* arrived faster than they could be discharged, and soldiers and civilians hurrying to and fro jostled each other in the narrow streets. Susa had already its *Café de la Victoire* and *Restaurant de la République*, and everybody was putting up French sign-boards, and advertising French wares, in spite of the orders of a zealous Italian Vice-Consul, who held any such proceeding on the part of "his" subjects to be of a decidedly penal character. Preparations were being made to mount a battery of heavy siege guns on the Kasbah, the telegraph *corps* had already received the material necessary to lay a line as the troops advanced, and a M. De Cauville had already commenced a miniature railway, which was to get to Kairwán almost as soon as the columns, and be one of the most novel and striking features of the campaign. It was soon discovered, however, that the little engine, "le Kérouan," could not be coaxed across the Susa hill, and when General Logerot's tramcar went off the line seventeen times on the journey from Kairwán to Susa, he is said to have spoken unkindly of the new-fangled invention, most of the rails of which have now sunk deep into the Sidi-el-Hani marshes.

The Susa column was constituted as follows :— One battalion of the 48th Regiment, one of the 66th, and one of the 116th, forming the 13th Régiment de Marche, commanded by Lieutenant-Colonel Moulin; one battalion of the 19th Regiment, one of the 62d, and one of the 138th, forming the 14th Regiment de Marche under Lieutenant-Colonel Lannes; the 23d Chasseurs à Pied; the 6th Regiment of Hussars, three batteries of mountain guns, the 17th Squadron of the Military Train, one company of Engineers, one railway company, one telegraph company, one complete *service d'ambulance*, and a military chaplain. These form the 7th Brigade, commanded by General Étienne. Among the various commissariat arrangements, I was particularly struck with a number of very large cast-iron ovens for baking bread. They are carried in pieces, can be easily put together, and will turn out 1000 rations *per diem*. During the march every officer and private was to forage and cook for himself.

The military occupation of Susa was complete, and the authority of the Tunisian Governor-General Bacouch had become quite as shadow-like as that of the Bey, and all he asked was to be allowed to go away in peace. The keys of the town gates were brought every day at sunset to Colonel Moulin, who returned them at dawn.

When I was at Susa the sole topic of conversation seemed to be the fighting with the Arabs outside the town, and the prospects of the coming campaign. The order to march on Kairwán was expected from day to day with feverish anxiety. While still in the midst of the turmoil of this once tranquil and sleepy Tunisian coast town, I wrote the following note on the position of affairs, which was afterwards almost entirely verified :—

Kairwán is between forty and fifty miles as the crow flies from Susa, and the French calculate that it will be five days' march, making due allowance for attacks by the Arabs *en route*. After leaving Susa the road to Kairwán for ten or twelve miles passes over hills covered with dense olive forests ; after that succeeds a wide expanse of undulating, open country up to the very walls of the Tunisian Mecca. Water supply there is none ; the few wells at Sidi-el-Hani have been damaged by the Arabs, and even at Susa the water obtainable is insufficient. In the Kasbah there is an enormous well 240 ft. deep, but its contents are unfit for drinking purposes. A large number of camels will accompany the column, each carrying two casks containing twenty-four gallons of water. During the march through the olive woods the French fully expect to be severely harassed by the Arabs after the manner of their recent reconnaissances, and, as they invariably elude pursuit, it is apprehended that they will take advantage of the French advance into the Kairwán plain to intercept if possible communication with the coast, or, at any rate, to pillage the whole of the province of the Sahel between Susa and Sfax. The district of Susa proper alone contains fifty-three populous villages, including Kala Grande and Mesaken, the latter being

larger than Susa itself, and the Sheikhs of these villages have informed the nominal governor of that place that as soon as the French column has passed westwards the insurgents will devastate their farms and carry off the remnant of their cattle. It must also be remembered that in a strategic point of view the seaports of Monastir and Mehdiá are quite as important as Susa, and that neither of them has been occupied. This is quite as great a blunder as the undefended French railway turned out to be in Northern Tunis, and which, but for the massacre of Oued Zerga, would have been supplemented by the equally capital error of leaving the unoccupied city of Tunis in the rear of the columns advancing southwards on Kairwán. The expeditionary force from Tebessa will be utterly powerless to prevent the attack of the Arabs on the Sahel, and if this takes place (as it certainly will) and extends even to Sfax and Gabes, the garrisons at those places can effect nothing beyond their own walls, as they are masters of just the land they stand on, and nothing more.

The French will meet with no resistance at Kairwán itself. The townspeople have long since arranged this with their more courageous fellow-countrymen, who have agreed to attack the French simultaneously at distant points, and who are now fighting at Kef and Ghardimaou and in the valleys and defiles of Zaghouán, and who, after an obstinate resistance in the olive groves between Susa and Mesaken, will retreat only to carry the fire and sword along the Sahel from Susa to Gabes, and very probably to appear before Monastir and Mehdiá.

Whatever may be the fate of Kairwán, the end will be as far off as ever. Several of the Susa Arabs remarked to me that they once thought only their coasts and fertile lands were wanted, but they are now convinced that their faith is to be assailed by the invaders. Up to the present time, no sort of disorder has occurred in Kairwán itself. The Arabs who had resolved to undertake the holy but hopeless task of

its defence, are believed to have retired to other parts of the country, and a white flag will be hoisted on the Great Mosque as a sign of unconditional submission as soon as the French columns appear before it. What will then happen it is difficult to foresee, but the French soldiers in Tunis have already made up their minds as to the practical inutility of the concentration of so much pomp of war on the taking of an undefended city, the fortifications of which belong to the Middle Ages, and which is only too anxious to surrender; and a very unfortunate comparison is generally made between the Treaty of Kasr-es-Said as preceding the opening of the French Chambers on the 14th of May, and the probable capture of Kairwán as happening just before the 28th of October.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

FIGHTING IN THE SOUTH.

COLONEL MOULIN is perhaps one of the ablest officers who has taken part in the little real fighting of the Fourth Punic War. He had not been many hours in Susa before he understood the dangers and difficulties of the situation—his garrison masters of the town, the enemy masters of everything outside it. On the 13th September the “Galisonnière” frigate proceeded a few miles down the coast in the direction of Kala, where Caid Bilawar of the Enfida was supposed to be commanding the insurgents. When opposite the village ten shells were thrown into it, and its inhabitants fled. On the 15th September Colonel Moulin made his first reconnaissance, and at the head of 1200 infantry and a battery of artillery marched on Kala by land. When only two miles from Susa the first brush with the enemy took place, and the insurgents soon retreated and sought the cover of the olive groves. Here they rallied, and the sounds of musketry and

artillery were heard at Susa for more than an hour. The Arabs momentarily maintained their position, but were as a matter of course dislodged by artillery with a severe loss. The French afterwards entered Kala, and hoisted the tricolour. On their return to Susa, however, the place was once more occupied by the Arabs, who the same day devastated a tract of country in the vicinity.

These facts, added to repeated attempts to shoot the French sentries, convinced Colonel Moulin that very constant and very energetic demonstrations of force were necessary to keep the Arabs in check. Neither Colonel Moulin himself, nor General Étienne, who shortly afterwards assumed the chief command at Susa, had the smallest desire to hinder unlicensed writing "about their proceedings," and by their courtesy a young English officer was attached to the column until I joined it myself at Kairwán, a few days after the occupation. Lieutenant Kane's letters, therefore, form a chapter in the history of the war in Tunis, hardly less important than those based on the journals of Mr. Perkins or Mr. Galea. His first communication describes a second reconnaissance, executed by Colonel Moulin, four days later:—

SUSA, *September 25.*

On Monday I heard that Colonel Moulin intended to march against the Arabs at Sehleen, a village nine miles east of Susa,

and I obtained leave to accompany him. We started on the 20th, at about four o'clock in the morning. After we had cleared the town a halt was made, and an advance guard sent out, which was at once formed into a long line of *tirailleurs* in single rank at about thirty paces' interval on each side of the line of march. Three hundred yards behind was another line of exactly the same formation, only that the intervals were much closer; then came the main body, marching in columns of sections, followed by the mountain battery, with the guns strapped on the backs of mules, while the rear of the column was brought up by another smaller body of infantry. The column consisted of 1200 infantry and a battery of mountain guns. The infantry consisted of portions of the 48th, 66th, and 116th Regiments, and the battery belonged to the 33d Brigade of Artillery. Colonel Moulin's staff consisted of a brigade-major, two aides-de-camp, two doctors, and six or seven mounted Arabs, who acted as guides and interpreters. After a march of two hours and a half without anything happening worthy of notice, we came in sight of the village of Sehleen, where we found a white flag in token of submission flying from the top of a tower. When we arrived the villagers were all grouped round the tower, and two chiefs were waiting with them. Colonel Moulin questioned them as to their arms, &c., and then orders were given to pitch the camp and breakfast; at the same time two strong picquets were posted on the north and east of the village, as by this time bodies of Arab horse were plainly seen on the hills about two miles away.

Sehleen is between two and three miles from the coast and is surrounded by olive gardens, fenced in by very thick prickly pear hedges. Before we had finished breakfast the rattle of musketry on the east side of Sehleen told us that the Arabs had begun the attack, so I mounted and followed M. Walewski, Colonel Moulin's aide-de-camp, towards the

place where the firing was going on. We found the outposts keeping up a brisk fire with the Arabs from among a lot of olive-trees. The Arabs were protected by the same sort of cover, but were separated from us by a level piece of ground about 500 yards wide. I stayed at this point for about twenty minutes, when I observed that the guns had got into position on some high land to the right, and that the infantry under their cover were making a turning movement on the left flank of the Arab position. A few shrapnel shells soon sent the Arabs out of their cover, followed by the *tirailleurs*, and this sort of thing went on for more than two hours. The Arabs were present in great numbers, and showed great courage and endurance, sometimes galloping up, dismounting, firing at us, and then retreating like lightning. The French did the skirmishing work excellently, but their fire is not good, for we only found when we came up to their position six dead and one wounded. The Arabs kept retreating farther and farther with wonderful rapidity, and at last they were only just visible from the top of a hill. The guns were then brought up the hill, and at a range of 3000 metres six shells were fired into a crowd of Arabs in the plain beneath, who were endeavouring to gain the shelter of a very large olive wood beyond. This ended everything; the French had two soldiers wounded, but a great many fell out from fatigue and had to be brought in by Arab carts. That night we camped on the sea-shore. The French have all an idea that some Italian officers are with the Arabs, and it is to this they ascribe the Bedouins adopting more effective movements than they did six months ago. Be this as it may, they make no secret of their opinion on this subject. I should have estimated the total Arab loss at 40, but General Bacouch, the Tunisian Governor, says 95 were killed and 150 wounded.

The Arabs did not appear to be materially dis-

couraged by their defeat at Sehleen : they attacked Mesaken and some of the principal places near Susa, and it was extremely difficult to know to what extent the villagers themselves sympathised with the insurgents. Meanwhile General Étienne arrived, and an expedition in force started on the 8th October under his personal command, in the direction of Mesaken, of which Lieutenant Kane gives the following account :—

October 9.

Yesterday morning, at 5.30, I started with the French column for Mesaken, a village about twelve miles from Susa, in the direction of Kairwán. The column was 4500 strong, including 450 men of the 6th Hussars, who had just arrived here. Nothing of any moment occurred till we arrived there, when the camp was pitched about a mile from the village, which about a fortnight since sent in its submission. The cavalry made a reconnaissance the same evening, and had a slight brush with the Arabs. At night a strong cordon of outposts was made all round the camp, consisting of a number of guards broken up into what the French call *petites postes*. I myself accompanied one of these guards and slept out (or rather did not sleep) all the night. About ten P.M. it began to rain heavily, and as we were talking under some olive-trees one of the two sentries suddenly fired his rifle. Going out to see what had happened, we found an Arab about forty yards off quite dead. There had been two there, but one escaped in the darkness and confusion. On the other side of the camp the Arabs crept up close to our guard, and shot two of the 138th Regiment dead and wounded another. The next morning a reconnaissance in force was made, and one could see on the hills all round a great number of horsemen.

I went with a squadron of cavalry in the direction of a village due south of Mesaken. At the top of the hill we suddenly came on the Arabs in the olive forest, and a skirmish took place. The troopers dismounted, and fired their carbines like infantry, but we soon had to fall back. By this time the *chassours-à-pied* on all sides of the camp were sharply engaged with the enemy. I am sure they must have had rifles, as at 500 yards they sent a lot of bullets over our heads. Orders were now given to strike camp and fall back, as it was General Étienne's intention merely to march out and encamp to exercise his men. All the way back to Susa a running fight took place, for by this time the Arabs had cut off communication with Susa and disputed every inch of the way. The artillery fired twenty shells into the insurgent villages. While we were marching home, the Arabs made a raid on Susa, and killed and carried away a lot of cattle quite close to the town. The Governor sent out some Gards and Hussars, but only two Arabs were caught. We reached the gates at five o'clock, being followed by the Arabs up to the walls. This evening one soldier was shot dead and another wounded, both near the town. It is quite unsafe now to leave Susa at all.

The news of this repulse created a very painful impression at Tunis, on its arrival there, a few hours after the occupation of the city, but it taught the French not altogether to despise their enemies, and served as a warning in future operations of the kind. Another week passed away, and the state of affairs around Susa became if possible worse than they were a month previously. On the 17th October, Lieutenant Kane writes :—

The state of the country round Susa is still highly unsatisfactory. The garrison in the town consists of 1000 men, and the Kairwán expeditionary column, about 6000 strong, is encamped outside the walls on the land side. During the past week the Arabs have attacked the French outposts nightly, and sometimes with fatal results. Although cavalry reconnaissances take place every day, they have failed to come up with the insurgents. Yesterday I could distinctly see from the town walls large bodies of mounted Arabs moving rapidly from one olive grove to another. The French admit that the Arabs' skirmishing attacks are now better executed, and that many of the insurgents are armed with rifles. Ali Hammara, one of the Arab chiefs, with a single companion, rode to within 300 yards of the French outposts, but, although his horse was shot, he contrived to elude pursuit. Two villages near Susa were pillaged on Thursday, the Arabs carrying off their booty successfully as usual. The previous day a French sergeant was fired at in the town itself.

Last night a very regrettable incident occurred here, which has intensified the ill-feeling already existing towards the French in the Italian colony. The Chancellor of the Italian Vice-Consulate, while proceeding to his home at night, was fired at by some French Hussars in a state of intoxication. The culprits, who subsequently shot a native butcher, are in custody. The Italian Consul has sent to-day a very strong protest to his superior at Tunis.

Two of the principal inhabitants of Kairwán have arrived here, and have had a prolonged interview with General Étienne. Within the last five days the insurgents have carried off about 4000 sheep from the Susa district alone.

This morning a Maltese and three Arabs were attacked by the insurgents about two miles from Susa, and deprived of everything they possessed, including several camels laden with valuable merchandise.

A large body of insurgents have collected around Mehelia, and, as an attack seemed imminent, the French Consular Agent detained the gunboat "Chacal" for the defence of the European residents.

Two native vessels, laden with dates and bound for Susa, were boarded by Arab pirates, who ill-treated the crew and appropriated the cargo. The French have seized four native boats on suspicion of being implicated in this affair. At Gabes attempts are continually made to shoot the French sentinels. The garrison there is being decimated by an epidemic fever. Several Greeks have been arrested at Sfax on a charge of supplying the insurgents with arms and ammunition, and their shops have been confiscated.

On the following day, October 18th, Colonel Moulin marched out in force to Kala Sghira ("little Kala"), and attacked the Arabs, who fell back only after an obstinate and prolonged struggle. Some of the dead bodies of the insurgents were brought to Susa, and exposed at the town gate for the purpose of identification. After a time permission was given to the Susa Moors to bury them, and in spite of the presence of the garrison they received the honours of a semi-public funeral. The following letter contains an account of the last *sortie* of the Susa troops prior to their departure for Kairwán :—

WITH GENERAL ÉTIENNE'S COLUMN,
NEAR SUSA, October 21.

For four days the Arabs have ceased their attacks on the French outposts. On Tuesday morning they began to harass

as usual, but the sharpshooters drove them back with a loss of forty killed and a great many more wounded. At eleven A.M. I went out with a small force commanded by a subaltern. No Arabs, however, were visible, with the exception of about a dozen who were hiding behind the olive-trees, and who were put to flight in a few minutes, after one of them had been killed. We then advanced for about three miles and occupied all the houses we passed, but as we came up with no insurgents we returned to Susa in the afternoon. Yesterday, to the relief of everybody, our marching orders arrived, and the column will finally move on Kairwán to-morrow. From the moment the contents of General Saussier's despatch became known there has been no cessation of the bustle of preparation. Later in the day I accompanied an advance party, under Colonel Moulin, to choose a site for a railway *dépôt* and camp about twelve miles west of Susa, on the direct road to Kairwán. We advanced through the olive forests which surround Susa in very nearly the same order as we marched on Schleen a month ago, and preceded by a long line of skirmishers in single rank at an interval of thirty paces, covering quite a mile of front, supported by little knots of men about 200 yards in their rear, followed in their turn by larger bodies. Colonel Moulin believes his plan of advance will defeat all insidious attempts to surprise him on the part of the Arabs. Our recent experience led us to expect some kind of attack, but we arrived at one mile's distance from Kala Piccola without meeting an enemy. Here an excellent site for a camp presented itself—a long valley, surrounded on nearly all its sides by a belt of rocky, high ground, with a large olive garden in its centre from end to end. The French troops set to work at once to surround the whole place with shelter trenches, which will render it practically impregnable to an Arab attack. Fortunately, a good well between Kala and the camp will afford us the necessary supply of water

for the march. The escort in charge of the stores will remain here, and the rest of the column will join us to-morrow. As yet no hitch has taken place in the arrangements, and a speedy arrival before Kairwán is confidently anticipated. As yet not a single shot has been fired.

In another chapter I shall take my readers in company with General Étienne's column from Susa to Kairwán.

CHAPTER XXXV.

RECRIMINATIONS AND EXECUTIONS.

THE ten days which elapsed between the occupation of the city of Tunis and the start of the columns for Kairwán were peculiarly unhappy for all parties to the Tunisian Question. Public opinion in France became day by day more alive to the grim humour of the situation, and it was difficult to tell whether General Farre or M. Barthélémy Saint-Hilaire came in for the greater share of sarcasm and abuse. The Ministers were in constant trepidation as to whether the Arabs would allow them to serve up the taking of Kairwán as a second *plat de la gloire* at the opening of the Chambers, and M. Camille Pelletan was busy at Tunis laying bare the profligate corruption of the Roustan *entourage* for future use in the tribune and the witness-box. Typhoid fever and dysentery were decimating the French ranks at Manouba and the Goletta, and the pleasant palace of General Kheir-ed-Din on the shores of the Mediterranean, which the Société Marseillaise had grate-

fully placed at the disposal of Madame Elias Musalli in the halcyon days of the Protectorate, was now converted into a fever hospital, and was affording the most damning statistics for the able pen and caustic criticism of M. Le Faure. The "Epoca" kept all Italy in continued merriment over French tribulation in Tunis, and the Italians began to see in the increasing perplexities of their neighbours in Africa the Nemesis of Marseilles. At Tunis itself matters were hardly less complicated than at Paris; the Bey had lost Mustapha and his capital, and would not be consoled, and the obstinacy of despair had taken the place of the complacency of the conquered. The demands of M. Roustan were now met with threats of abdication, and it became evident that unless Mustapha was restored to his arms, the machinery of the Protectorate would soon come to a deadlock. Meanwhile Taib Bey had declared war against M. Roustan, and was fast creating a powerful party in his own favour. The Minister Resident now learned the inexpediency of playing with the folly and vanity of a weak man: Frenchmen in Tunis were divided pretty evenly into the Sadekians and Taibians, and waged a relentless war against each other of invective and personality. While M. Roustan was employed in reassuring M. Saint-Hilaire, cajoling the Bey, and

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fighting the Taibist faction, the real influence at the Bardo Palace fell into the hands of General Musalli, under whose auspices a channel of circumlocution was devised which beggars all description; and it will hardly be believed that in describing it, I am speaking in sober seriousness of a country enjoying the inestimable blessings of a mission of civilisation all to itself. To transact any sort of business with the Tunisian Government it was now necessary to apply in the first instance to a Jew china-dealer in the Tunis bazaar. If the preliminary arrangements were satisfactory, the crockery merchant placed the matter before his wife, who interested her brother the Tunisian Mint-Master, who in turn consulted his wife, who communicated on the subject with General Elias Musalli, who spoke to Madame Musalli, who finally explained the affair to M. Roustan. It must be remembered that all this was going on whilst the military cemeteries at Manouba and Goletta were growing apace; while French blood was being shed near Susa and in the defiles of Zaghouán, and while the lives of innocent Maltese and Italian labourers were being sacrificed to the fury of a wantonly provoked race hatred. I bring no charge of corruption against the Minister Resident; I am even told he is still "a very poor man." If this is so, it

is singularly unfortunate that the French Republic ever trusted her destinies to one who, by his own showing, became the veriest dupe of designing men and women.

This, then, was the state of things at Tunis during the first three weeks of October 1881. The fast increasing camp at Manouba did not seem to overawe the Arabs in the interior, nor did the frequent reconnaissances of General Sabatier from Zaghouán effect any pacification beyond what he himself called the zone of his operations. On the very day the French entered Tunis, the British Consular Agent at Hammamet wrote as follows:—
“As nearly all the soldiers composing the French garrison were disabled by fever, the place was evacuated. No sooner were the ships out of sight than the Arabs sacked the villages of Menzel and Suleiman, ravaged the country again up to the walls of the town itself, and forced our servants who went in search of fodder to return in haste to Hammamet. During two months I have lost all my camels, besides 800 goats and 500 sheep.”

A fortnight later an event occurred on the railway, which took me once more to Medjez-el-Bab, from which I wrote the following letter:—

MEDJEZ-EL-BAB, *October 25.*

To-day the partial interruption of the French Railway ser-

vice will cease, and to-morrow, for the first time since the ill-fated 30th of September, the trains will run along the whole length of the line from Tunis to Ghardimaou. A desire to learn something of the fate of the two Arabs who were shot yesterday at kilomètre 37 induced me to pay another visit to Medjez. Every station is now guarded by French soldiers, patrols of cavalry will pass continually from Tunis to Beja and from Beja to Ghardimaou, and the possibility of any further serious attack on the line will be thus avoided. The recriminations between the military authorities and the railway officials as to their respective share of blame for the calamity at Oued Zerga are exciting much attention. In the first flush of excitement General Logerot was very unanimously censured for failing to occupy the line, but it now appears that all the information possessed by the railway officials as to the disturbed state of the Arabs was intentionally withheld from him, and that when he proposed to garrison the stations, he was told that the soldiers could only travel as passengers. This objection gave rise to a prolonged discussion, and it is now clear that the sacrifice of life and property between Medjez and Beja was mainly occasioned by a miserable haggling between the civil and military authorities as to the expenditure of a few thousand francs. As to the part played in this matter by the manager of the line, the following document, which was found half burnt in the ruined station at Oued Zerga, speaks for itself :—

“GENERAL CIRCULAR 68.

“The station-masters on the line are forbidden to correspond telegraphically or by letter with the military authorities, or to furnish them with facts or rumours relating to the public safety. The station-masters must correspond directly with the manager, who will inform the competent authorities in case of necessity. The railway servants are requested only to communicate such facts as are previously verified by them-

selves, and are recommended to attach no importance to false news and alarming rumours, which in most cases have no other object than to disturb the public peace.

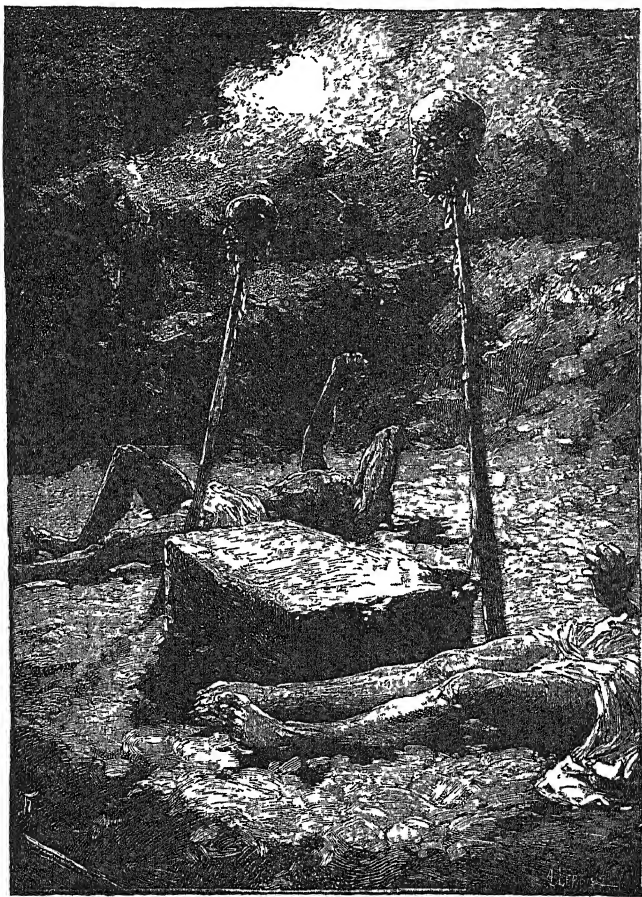
(Signed) "AUBERT, *Engineer and Manager*.

"*Tunis, 13th September 1881.*"

During the 28th and 29th of September the officers at Tunis were inundated with reports as to the hostile attitude of the Arabs around Zerga; M. Raimbert even demurred to remaining there the evening before his death, and when taunted with cowardice, answered, "Then I am going to my destruction;" and several *employés* quitted their posts rather than continue on the threatened portion of the line. M. Aubert made no communication to General Logerot; and everybody knows the result. As I have often pointed out, the apparently chronic disagreement between military and civil authorities has entailed some of the most calamitous mistakes and grossest blunders which have characterised the Tunisian campaign.

The Railway Company seems now anxious to atone for its former want of energy. On the morning of Sunday (October 23) some Arabs were observed placing a stone on the line in the vicinity of Tabourba. The train returned to that place, and having obtained a military escort, the railway officials promptly repaired to the spot in question. After a chase two Arabs were captured in the neighbourhood, who were identified by the engine-driver as being among the offenders. It seems unlikely that the Arabs who really committed the crime, and who must have learnt by the return of the train that they were detected, should have hung about the locality in order to be captured, and the Caïd of Tabourba assured the French authorities that he personally knew the accused as unoffending and peaceable shepherds, but they were promptly conveyed to Tunis and brought before General Japy. They were at once sentenced to die on the

scene of their alleged offence. A special train was prepared, which brought the prisoners to Tabourba, where the respectable inhabitants of the town were ordered to be in attendance. They were imperatively invited to enter one of the carriages, and travel to kilomètre 37, where they would witness the execution of their co-religionists. Soon after their arrival, the two Arabs were shot by a platoon of French soldiers, the prisoners being secured in the middle of the permanent way, and the mufti, head-man, and other notables of Tabourba, being compelled to look on from the top of the cutting. The heads of the supposed culprits were then struck off and fixed on two poles on the side of the line *pour encourager les autres*. Just after the men had been shot, the train from Medjez was observed to be approaching. A guard was sent on to stop it. It happened to contain two companies of infantry, sent on the previous day from Manouba to Medjez, owing to a rumour of an impending Arab attack on that place. The guard who stopped the train could only speak French imperfectly, and all that was intelligible were the words "Arab attack." The officer in command at once directed his soldiers to descend and advance in skirmishing order. They perceived the unfortunate notables of Tabourba on an eminence, and it was only just as they were about to fire on them that they perceived the French in the hollow, and a very sad sequel to the former tragedy was thus averted. I saw the two heads at kilomètre 37 as I passed on to Medjez yesterday. The impression produced by the occurrence is a very unfortunate one. The haste with which the proceedings were conducted greatly tends to confirm the assertion of the Arabs that the case in question was merely an example of the indiscriminate punishment which they allege is being dealt out to them all over the country, and makes them entertain very serious doubt as to the reality of the promises contained in the Saussier manifesto.



EN TUNISIE.—Châtiment infligé aux auteurs d'un deraillement de chemin de fer.
Dessin de M. de Haenen, d'après le croquis de M. Dick.)

CHAPTER XXXVI.

THE TAKING OF KAIRWÁN.

EVER since the middle of August preparations had been in progress for the capture of the so-called focus of Moslem sedition in North Africa. Although everybody knew from the first, that Kairwán was built in the middle of a plain, with no other defence than dilapidated battlements and a few old cannon of uncertain age, all the refinements of modern warfare were brought to bear on the undertaking. This being the case, nearly two months elapsed before the various columns which were to encompass the Holy City could be made ready to commence the elaborate concentric movement, which, in the dreams of M. Saint-Hilaire, was to crush out rebellion from one end of the Regency to the other, and envelop at the same time in its meshes the authors and abettors of the insurrection. The coming campaign had cost Generals Saussier and Logerot a vast amount of trouble, and this was hardly to be wondered at, as

half the current maps of Tunis were drawn from imagination, and the only guide to Kairwán was a sketch plan made by Mr. Edward Rae some five years before. At last everything was agreed on ; General Étienne was to advance on Kairwán from Susa, General Forgemol was to move from Tebessa, and General Saussier in person was to march with Generals Logerot, Sabatier, and Philibert from Tunis and Zaghouán. The movement was to be made simultaneously, but the palm of conquest was to be reserved for the Commander-in-Chief. Roughly speaking, the total force employed in the expedition amounted to at least 22,000 men. On the 22d October General Étienne received orders to set out, and as he became by waywardness or accident the captor of Kairwán, I shall first follow his advance, before describing that of the columns Saussier and Forgemol.

Lieutenant Kane thus writes of the setting out of the French army from Susa :—

OUED LIA, *October 23d.*

I returned to Susa from the advance guard late last night in order to witness the final departure of the French troops on the following morning. The sight which presented itself before the walls of Susa at dawn on Saturday was certainly a very curious one. The main feature of the scene was our enormous baggage train, which consisted of over 1000 laden camels, 700 horses and mules, and a multitude of carts of all

sorts and sizes driven by Maltese. This unwieldy caravan was put in motion before it was light, and huge fires kindled from the refuse on our old camping-ground added to the picturesqueness of the scene. We had also a miscellaneous collection of camp followers. An ordinary Tunisian cab drawn by three mules conveyed M. La Mothe, the correspondent of the *Temps*, in our rear, and I noticed a German cavalry officer following the march on foot. At my suggestion he asked General Étienne for a written permission to accompany the column, which was readily granted as soon as it was applied for. With a view to obviate the possibility of any of the insurgents attacking our convoys, the advance guard was made strong enough to clear completely the line of march, and consisted of the 6th Hussars, a mountain battery, and the 116th Regiment. Additional precautions were taken to prevent surprise by throwing out a line of flanking parties on either side of the column. After the advance guard came the carts and heavy guns and then the infantry. Much confusion ensued in consequence of many of the camels and bullocks falling down under their enormous burdens. I rode to the front with the Hussars. We arrived at Colonel Lannes' camp at Kala Piccola ("little Kala") without any interruption, but to the right of the camp we heard some rather heavy firing. On entering the camp I could see the Hussars under Colonel Lannes hotly engaged with the Arab cavalry. The ground there was covered with small plateaux, and the Arabs were firing from one plateau at the Hussars on another, and *vice versa*. In about half an hour the Arabs were driven away, but it was impossible to ascertain their loss. The Hussars had a *sous-officier* wounded and a trooper killed. The cavalry of the advance guard were now extended in front and to the left of our line of march, and were engaged all along the front by small bodies of Arabs. We thus pushed on, driving the Arabs before us, until we arrived

within three miles of Oued Lia, which was to be our new camping-ground. With a field-glass I was able to see distinctly a body of about 400 Arab horsemen *en masse*. They, however, soon disappeared as the infantry, in skirmishing order, pushed right up to the lines of Hussars, and surrounded Oued Lia. To the left of the place, about two miles away, and on the crest of some rising ground, some Arabs were still in sight, but they were driven away by the French artillery. Oued Lia has been completely burnt out, but while the house of a Frenchman, M. Saccoman, was destroyed, that of the Caid of Susa was comparatively uninjured. Near the village I saw the corpse of a Maltese lying on a heap of stones and burnt to death. The unfortunate man started from Susa on Friday with a supply of wine for Colonel Lannes' soldiers, and, having missed his way, met this terrible fate at the hands of the Arabs. We have water in abundance at Oued Lia ("the Spreading River"), and an open ground in our front slopes up to the crest of the hills about three miles distant. We expect to halt here for one day at least. I afterwards learned that in the engagement to the left of the column the daring Zlass chief Ali Ben Hammara had been killed, and that a good rifle was found close to his body. Seven wounded soldiers were conveyed back to Susa in ambulance waggons. The advance guard had also come up with the Arabs and defeated them with severe loss.

OUED LIA, October 24th.

Colonel Lannes' column from Kala Piccola joined us to-day, together with the camels carrying water for our coming march. The allowance is to be five litres *per diem* for each horse and two for each man. It is feared that the Arabs have poisoned the wells at the next camping-ground, in which case it will be necessary to make a forced march on Kairwán. A report has reached us that the insurgents have already pillaged the city.

SIDI-EL-HANI, *October 25th.*

After leaving Oued Lia we soon reached the open plain. We are now at Sidi-el-Hani, and through a field-glass I can see a white streak of wall which I am told is Kairwán. We have not met a single Arab.

KAIRWÁN, *October 26th.*

Kairwán surrendered to-day without a blow being struck. When we were within two miles of the town Colonel Moulin, escorted by some cavalry and his staff, galloped on, and in a few minutes came within easy firing distance. Flanking parties of cavalry were sent out on each side of the town, and I went on with one of them. We rode right up to the walls, and immediately after the inhabitants hoisted the white flag on the tower of the Great Mosque. The staff then advanced to within speaking distance of the walls, and in a few minutes we were met by the Governor-General Mourabet, who rode towards us on a mule, led by two grooms, and who wore an enormous pair of yellow slippers. Mourabet declared that he voluntarily surrendered the town. The order to march was then given. Just one hour after the advance guard had reached the walls, the troops began to defile into the city through the Bab-el-Khaukh. Each battalion was headed by its trumpeter playing a fanfare. All the column passed through the town and then came out by the Tunis Gate on the opposite side. We are now encamped under the walls. The 48th Regiment only is stationed in the citadel. The soldiers have been strictly forbidden to enter the town. This has caused much disappointment and a good deal of openly expressed grumbling. The men are very fatigued, and the weather has been exceedingly hot, and the dust almost insupportable. All the country round Kairwán is a dried-up marsh. The Zaghouán column is reported to be within a few miles' march of us, but the Tebessa column will not arrive for two days at least. The

natives look sullen and dejected, and I have never seen one smile since we have been here. The French have confirmed the Tunisian General Mourabet in his appointment as Governor of Kairwán. The insurgents occupy the mountains near the city. They have not been subdued, and every one even here is laughing at the whole business. The arrangements of General Étienne and Colonel Moulin are excellent, and our supply of water is amply sufficient. It is rumoured that an expedition in Southern Tunis will be necessary.

General Saussier now appeared in the vicinity of Kairwán, and was very angry indeed because he was not there first of all. As France seems to consider the taking of Kairwán as little less heroic than the taking of Troy, the Commander-in-Chief had every reason to resent the laurel wreath being so unexpectedly snatched from his brow by one of his subordinates. Although the walk in and out of Kairwán seems to me a very commonplace occurrence, Frenchmen apparently think differently. Three months afterwards I happened to see the streets of Paris crowded with joyous conscripts, most of whom wore a brightly coloured picture in their hats. A closer inspection revealed my old friend, the "taking of Kairwán," flanked by a "bombardment of Sfax." In the former a cavalry officer was brandishing his sword at an open door, and in the latter a ferocious Zouave was to be seen in the act of cutting down an equally ferocious

Arab. In the middle was a colossal figure of the Republic holding out benignly wreaths of victory over Sfax and Kairwán. The inscription beneath was a modest one—*la gloire et la patrie*.

Lieutenant Kane did not share the veneration of the conscripts' artist. He next wrote as follows:—

KAIRWÁN, October 28th.

I have returned from a visit to General Saussier's camp, which is now pitched four miles north-west of Kairwán. With his large brigade are no fewer than three Generals, and very great jealousy exists on account of General Étienne and his Susa column carrying off the honours of the surrender. We are, I believe, treated with the gloomy prospect of being perpetually quartered at Kairwán in consequence. The contrast between the facilities given to correspondents by General Étienne and the treatment they received with the Commander-in-Chief is a very marked one. We now hear of a fourth column coming from Gabes, but its approach will be delayed as well as that of the Tebessa column. The tricolour of the 23d Chasseurs has been hoisted on the Kasbah. To appease the men they are now allowed to go in bodies of six into the city.

Later in the day four Arab messengers came back in a wretched plight. One of them had taken a message for the *Times*, and they had been sent with despatches from Kairwán to Susa, but returned, declaring they had been pillaged *en route*. Money being found on them, and complicity with the insurgents being suspected, they were immediately tried by court-martial and shot. It appears that Ali Hammara, the celebrated Arab chief killed at Kala Piccola, was buried with great pomp at Kairwán before the French arrived here. Nearly all the Kairwán townspeople are of the same origin as

the Zlass tribe. Eight of the principal sheikhs of Kairwán have been arrested by the French authorities. The Tebessa column is now a day's march from Kairwán.

On the 29th October General Forgemol's column also arrived, and he was likewise allowed *la gloire* of a march in at one gate and out of another, preceded by his *goumiers* and martial music. Twenty-two thousand men were now around the devoted city, but it appeared that on the 25th October the whole of the insurgents had levied as much blackmail as they could, and then started off for more congenial battlefields in the far south. It soon became apparent that although the troops had got to Kairwán, nobody knew why they had ever come there, and what they were to do next.

Lieutenant Kane wrote thus on the 2d November :—

The march of General Forgemol's African troops through the town has greatly impressed the inhabitants. Yesterday a conference took place in the camp between General Saussier and the Governor, the Cadi, and chief men of Kairwán. General Saussier intimated to the Governor that he required four things of him. First, that all insurgents belonging to the city should be brought back and surrendered unconditionally within two days; secondly, that prices of provisions in the town should be lowered; thirdly, that one hundred horsemen should be furnished for a postal service; fourthly, that the shops should be kept open all day. In the event of non-compliance, General Saussier said that very rigorous measures

would have to be adopted. Since yesterday a large number of horses, said to belong to the Zlass chiefs, have been given up to the French. The mosques have also been thrown open unreservedly to Christians and Jews. The Tunisian authorities are taking bribes not to denounce householders as belonging to the Zlass tribe. The prisons are full of political offenders, but several spies have been released after receiving a sound flogging. Large numbers of soldiers have visited the Great Mosque to-day. The guardians of other religious establishments are putting up French flags by the side of their distinctive banners. Preparations for the march on Gafsa have been recommenced.

This information induced me to visit Kairwán with a view of exploring its antiquities; but before describing the results of my journey, I should certainly complete my narrative of the other component marches of the concentric movement. General Saussier's advance from Manouba by way of Zaghouán presents no feature of possible interest. The reconnaissances of General Sabatier had cleared a great portion of the route, and after a brush between the advanced guard and the Arabs in the defiles of Foum-el-Karouba, the way was clear and even deserted. The skirmish was unfortunate, as it caused just enough delay to prevent the name of General Saussier from being handed down to posterity as the captor of Kairwán, although it cannot deprive him of whatever fame is due to the originator of a campaign, the essential feature of which

was "much ado about nothing," and in which wholesale cattle-lifting avowedly takes the place of hard fighting.

General Forgemol's march from Tebessa was a very different feat from General Saussier's march from Manouba. While at Kairwán I had access to the journal of the *goumiers* and other papers, and was able to write the following fairly correct account of an advance which awakens memories of Xenophon:—

One of the most notable features of the concentric movement of the French troops on Kairwán is undoubtedly General Forgemol's thirteen days' march from Beccaria, nine miles east of Tebessa. The Division Forgemol consists of 7000 combatants, escorting a convoy of 8800 camels and 1500 mules, which carried thirty days' provisions. Its composition is as follows:—Ten battalions of infantry, including three battalions of the 3d and two of the 1st Zouaves, three battalions of the 23d and one of the 1st Turcos, two battalions from the 100th and 34th of the Line, six squadrons of cavalry, the 3d Chasseurs d'Afrique, and two squadrons of the 3d Hussars, one troop of Spahis, together with 800 Goumiers, or Arab irregular cavalry, one battery of mountain guns, and another of horse artillery. The brigadiers under General Forgemol were Generals

De la Soug  olle and De Jislain. The cavalry brigade was commanded by General Bonic. The order of march was adapted to the requirements of the enormous convoy, which even in close square covered a large extent of ground. The advance guard consisted of four squadrons of cavalry and two battalions of infantry. The main body of troops followed, headed by two battalions of infantry and one battery of artillery, flanked by a battalion of infantry on each side. The baggage train in close column of route was formed by an intervening battalion into two divisions, the first containing the baggage and the second the provisions. On either flank marched a troop of cavalry. The rear of the column was brought up by the mountain guns, three battalions of infantry, and one squadron of cavalry, while the whole force was covered by a cloud of irregular cavalry on every side. General Forg  mol struck his camp at Beccaria early in the morning of the 16th of October, and in the afternoon of that day arrived at Ras-el-Aioun, on the Tunisian frontier. The next day a cavalry reconnaissance made a rapid movement to Hydra, some miles to the north-east of the boundary. Near the Roman ruins it was attacked by the warriors of the Ouled Maggers and the Frechich tribes, who had a few days before perpetrated a successful *razzia*

on Algerian territory between Ras-el-Aioun and Tebessa. The Goums suffered a loss of five killed and twenty-four wounded, and in the *mêlée* considerable confusion ensued owing to the similarity existing between their costume and that of their assailants. Two *goumiers* are even said to have been shot by mistake, and an order was subsequently issued that the Algerian irregulars should wear red, green, and yellow ribands on alternate days round their turbans, in order to distinguish them from their Tunisian co-religionists. The Arabs fought with great courage, and only retreated after a charge of French cavalry, in which fifteen of their horsemen were slain. The reconnaissance retired on Ras-el-Aioun in the evening, and the next day the division reached Hydra without further molestation. The heat was very oppressive, and the march lay across hills and valleys covered with brushwood. From Hydra a reconnaissance advanced some miles farther east to Hanout-el-Ajem, without encountering any resistance, and on the following day (the 20th of October) the whole column arrived there also. On the 21st General Forgemol reached Oudem-el-Ghanem, and some of the smaller tribes came in to demand the *aman* (pardon). After passing Henchir-Rohia a movement was made on the 23d of October towards Henchir-Sbeiba.

The camp had hardly been struck when the Goums reported the presence of 4000 Tunisian horsemen in the neighbouring ravines belonging to the tribes of the Ourten, Ouled Maggers, Ouled Ayar, and Hamáma. The Arabs commenced the attack, and were at length dislodged from their position by the infantry and artillery after an engagement which lasted till noon. During the action the column continued its advance, and after sunset reached Sbeiba. General Forgemol halted the following day at Sbeiba, and on the 25th of October commenced a march on Coudiat-el-Halfa. The assailants of the 23d resumed their attack simultaneously on the advance and rear guards. The Goums and infantry sustained some loss, and the Arabs finally yielded only to repeated charges of cavalry. From Coudiat-el-Halfa the column moved to Oued-el-Foul, and on the following day, before the march commenced, the Arabs in force assailed the camp on all sides except the east.

In spite of the attack, rendered more serious by the presence of contingents from the tribes of Zlass and Ouled Said, the troops advanced towards El Haouareb. The firing of the Arabs was silenced by the artillery about noon. Leaving El Haouareb next morning, the camp was pitched before sunset

at Biar Zlass, in sight of the *Minár* of Sidi Okhbah at Kairwán. Without meeting any further obstacle to the final advance, General Forgemol moved on next morning (October 29th) to Kairwán itself. Nearly all the effective strength of the column, with its bands playing the "Marseillaise," defiled through the Tunis Gate, and, passing across the bazaars and principal streets, returned to their camping-ground outside the city by way of the Bab-el-Djelladín.

Nothing has impressed the Kairwánis more than the presence of the Algerian army with its Moslem soldiers, who seem to have lost none of their religious ardour by their loyalty to the present rulers of their country. When the Turcos reached the Bab-el-Tunis a rumour spread with wonderful rapidity that the much-longed-for troops of the Sultan were at hand, but this momentary ray of hope soon gave place to bitter disappointment. From that moment the Moslems of Kairwán have apparently resigned themselves to their fate, and green-turbaned Ulema, and venerable Sheikhs of still more venerable sanctuaries, spend their time in exhibiting to their unbidden guests those very buildings, the entry into which a fortnight before would have cost the intruder his life.

I had while at Kairwán many opportunities of

talking over the campaign with several of the officers of the *Colonne Forgemol*. I shall not easily forget one of them, who had seen over a quarter of a century's service in Algeria, saying to me—"We came to Kairwán, but we have done nothing; we shall go to Gafsa, and we shall still do nothing, for we can never come up with the Arabs. In a single day they can march four times as far as we can, and as they have already removed their herds out of our reach we cannot starve them. In Tunis, as in Algeria, the conquest must be a matter of years. The Algerians have been tired out, the Tunisians must be tired out also."

The one question asked a thousand times a day at Kairwán during my stay was, "What will the Chamber decide about Tunis?" That question has never been answered yet. My own impression is, that there was not one of those brave men around Kairwán who was not heartily tired of an expedition which as yet has done nothing but call forth misplaced energy and zeal, and the ultimate results of which are justly dreaded by every patriotic Frenchman.

CHAPTER XXXVII.

INSIDE KAIRWÁN.

ALTHOUGH Kairwán is only six days' journey from London, it was a month ago quite as much a *terra incognita* as many of the great towns of Central Africa. Few still existing cities have played so important a part in the world's history, yet the world knew it not. Only a hundred miles south of Tunis itself, and but forty miles away from the great and busy highway of the Mediterranean, Kairwán, secure in its exclusiveness and its sanctity, has slumbered away the 1200 years of its existence, until it suddenly finds itself in the presence of a foe that it is powerless to resist, and discovers that even its most venerated shrines and sanctuaries can no longer be hidden from the gaze of unbelievers. It would be difficult to describe the precise offence which Kairwán has committed to merit the signal punishment it has received. For centuries it has been the centre of the great nomadic tribes which surround it, and in the early

KAIRWÁN.

1. Grand Mosque of Okhbah.
2. Kísla (Citadel).
3. Záonia Abd el Kadir el Ghiláni.
4. Djáma bou thletha Biban.
5. Záonia Tidjania.
5. Bab et-Tunis.
6. Covered Market.
7. Three Mosques in chief street.
8. Governor's House.
9. Záonia Sidi Abíd.
10. Bab Djelladín.
11. Záonia Aissouriá.
12. Gate of Peaches.
13. New Gate.
14. Mosque of Olive tree.
15. Mosque Amír Abáda.
16. Road to Záonia Sidi Essaheb.
17. Cistern.
18. Citadel Gate.
19. Mounds now fortified.
20. Great Cemetery.
21. Market extra muros.
 - A. Faubourg Jibliyah.
 - B. Faubourg Kabliyah.

days of the Tunisian insurrection the old spirit of its inhabitants may have momentarily revived. If such was indeed the case, the Kairwánis must have soon realised their own impotency. The bombardment of Sfax and Gabes conveyed to them a very practical lesson; and the religious authorities of Kairwán in council were not likely to rely on their own legend—that their crumbling ramparts and ruined bastions were shot and shell proof. In vain they begged their more courageous disciples to retire from the city: the latter refused to act contrary to the theoretical teaching of their *Ulemas*; and it was only when the French columns were actually visible, and the destruction of the city imminent, that the nonagenarian Bash-Mufti of Kairwán succeeded in persuading the Zlass chiefs to rapidly retire to the neighbouring mountains, and then saved the town from certain destruction by sending a frightened *muezzin* to wave a square yard of white calico from the crenellated minaret of the mosque of the conqueror of Africa.

Kairwán is built in the centre of a wide-stretching sandy plain, fringed on three sides by mountains, and towards the west by a low range of hills which separates it from the sea-coast. This plain is traversed on the same side by two streams, dry in summer, but strong enough in winter to sur-

round the city with a marsh. Excepting scanty tufts of esparto grass, no sort of verdure is to be seen in any direction. It was in such a spot as this that about the year A.D. 675 (A.H. 55), the Emir Okhbah Ben Nafi Ben Abdullah Ben Kais el Fahri laid the foundation of *the* Holy City of North Africa. For a thousand years, as far as can be ascertained, no Christian ever visited it. Since then a few travellers have been at intervals allowed to enter it on sufferance, the local authorities being entitled to reject the Bey's order if so disposed. When once admitted, visitors were carefully allowed to see as little as possible. An entrance to any building was of course out of the question, and the traveller had to be generally contented with a rapid passage through the most unfrequented streets under a strong escort; and finding a prolonged stay useless, he generally seems to have taken his departure as speedily as possible. Dr. Shaw accordingly only devotes two pages of his book to his stay at Kairwán in 1730. He identifies it, however, on insufficient grounds, with the Roman Vicus Augusti, and says it contained 500 mosques. Sir Grenville Temple, just one century later, journeyed "to the present hot-bed of all the bigotry of Muhammedanism in Africa." He was, nevertheless, able to tell very

THE LAST PUNIC WAR

